



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**POPULATION-CENTRIC INTELLIGENCE, REPRESSION,  
AND THE CYCLES OF CONTENTION**

by

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December 2008

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<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
<b>1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)</b>		<b>2. REPORT DATE</b> December 2008	<b>3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED</b> Master's Thesis	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> Population Centric Intelligence and the Cycles of Contention			<b>5. FUNDING NUMBERS</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Justin Mahoney and Michael Spinello				
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> N/A			<b>10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
<b>12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			<b>12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE</b>	
<b>13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)</b>  <p>In this thesis, we examine the role of intelligence in the cycle of contention between the state and emergent insurgent movements within the context of violent contentious politics. This thesis explores the implications of initial levels of intelligence vis-à-vis the scope, organization, modus operandi, and composition of nascent insurgent movements. Specifically, the thesis considers the role that particular types of intelligence play in allowing for effective repression targeting and timing to counter emerging insurgent threats. Furthermore, we explore and expand upon the notion proposed by Mohammed Hafez that a reactive and indiscriminate repression policy, attendant on a paucity of initial intelligence, has the effect of causing a nascent insurgent movement to become: 1) increasingly violent; 2) less visible to the state as it resorts to informal networks for mobilization and operation; and 3) expanded in size as a greater number of individuals become alienated from the state and find common cause with the insurgent movement and its framing of the conflict. Finally, we consider how adaptive states may learn from the dynamic interaction with insurgent movements by improving their intelligence paradigm to generate that intelligence which allows for increasingly proactive and discriminate repression.</p>				
<b>14. SUBJECT TERMS:</b> Population-centric intelligence, ethnographic intelligence, law enforcement intelligence, insurgency, repression policy, repression, intelligence policy, counterinsurgency, insurgency, Social Movement Theory, SMT, social movements, contentious politics, Northern Ireland, Vietnam, Phoenix program, Phung Hoang, CORDS, ICEX, Irish Republican Army, IRA, Provisional IRA			<b>15. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 151	
			<b>16. PRICE CODE</b>	
<b>17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT</b> Unclassified	<b>18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE</b> Unclassified	<b>19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT</b> Unclassified	<b>20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> UU	

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OF CONTENTION**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
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## **ABSTRACT**

In this thesis, we examine the role of intelligence in the cycle of contention between the state and emergent insurgent movements within the context of violent contentious politics. This thesis explores the implications of initial levels of intelligence vis-à-vis the scope, organization, modus operandi, and composition of nascent insurgent movements. Specifically, the thesis considers the role that particular types of intelligence play in allowing for effective repression targeting and timing to counter emerging insurgent threats. Furthermore, we explore and expand upon the notion proposed by Mohammed Hafez that a reactive and indiscriminate repression policy, attendant on a paucity of initial intelligence, has the effect of causing a nascent insurgent movement to become: 1) increasingly violent; 2) less visible to the state as it resorts to informal networks for mobilization and operation; and 3) expanded in size as a greater number of individuals become alienated from the state and find common cause with the insurgent movement and its framing of the conflict. Finally, we consider how adaptive states may learn from the dynamic interaction with insurgent movements by improving their intelligence paradigm to generate that intelligence which allows for increasingly proactive and discriminate repression.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

We would like to thank the staff and faculty of the Department of Defense Analysis at the Naval Postgraduate School. Their wisdom, encouragement, and support were unflagging. In particular, we would like to thank Professor David Tucker for keeping us practically focused as we explored the limits of our theory and Colonel Brian Greenshields for his mentorship throughout.

We would especially like to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of Professor Doowan Lee. Were he not so gracious in allowing us to pilfer all of his best ideas and claim them as our own, this thesis would not have been possible.

Justin would like to thank his children, Thomas and Sophia, for their unconditional and constant love; and his wife, Jennifer, for her love and boundless patience throughout our time at the Naval Postgraduate School.

Mike would like to acknowledge the constant example of his children, Michael and Grace, without whom he would not have been graced with their gifts of humility and perspective. I also thank my lovely wife Abby, for the years of patience and humor throughout which your unrelenting and loving support for me has never faltered.

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. BACKGROUND**

In this thesis, we intend to examine the role of intelligence type in the cycle of contention between the state and emergent insurgent movements within the context of violent contentious politics. This thesis will explore the implications of initial levels of intelligence vis-à-vis the scope, organization, modus operandi, and composition of nascent insurgent movements. Specifically, the thesis will consider the role that particular types of intelligence play in allowing for effective repression targeting and timing to counter emerging insurgent threats. Furthermore, we intend to explore and expand upon the notion proposed by Mohammed Hafez that a reactive and indiscriminate repression policy, attendant on a paucity of initial intelligence, has the effect of causing a nascent insurgent movement to become: 1) increasingly violent, 2) less visible to the state as it resorts to informal networks for mobilization and operation, and 3) expanded in size as a greater number of individuals become alienated from the state and find common cause with the insurgent movement and its framing of the conflict. Finally, we will consider how adaptive states may learn from the dynamic interaction with insurgent movements by improving their intelligence paradigm to generate that intelligence which allows for increasingly proactive and discriminate repression.

## **B. FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In Chapter II, we will define what we mean when we refer to an insurgent movement and describe the insurgency/counterinsurgency milieu in terms of theoretical concepts borrowed from Social Movement Theory. We will then turn our focus to the counterinsurgent; first describing the foundations of successful counterinsurgent strategy based on the population-centric model proposed by Gordon McCormick. Confining ourselves to the coercive component of this strategy, and by way of Hafez's typology of repression, we will describe how repressive measures practiced by the counterinsurgent can be effective at both dismantling the insurgency and concomitantly strengthening popular perceptions of state legitimacy. We will also describe the relationship between

intelligence and counterinsurgency in a general sense, and further develop how intelligence type is critical to both dismantling the insurgency and strengthening the counterinsurgent's legitimacy.

In Chapter III, we will introduce our expansion of Hafez's typology of repression, which will link intelligence type, repression selection, and movement emergence intensity and durability to the cycles of contention in the context of violent contentious politics.

In Chapters IV and V, using a selection of two case studies chosen for the: 1) conduct of both a foreign and domestic counterinsurgency respectively, and 2) opportunity in each for counterinsurgent learning over time, we hope to accomplish two things. First, we intend, by way of process tracing, to identify evidence lending support to Hafez's model and the relationships that we identify between intelligence type and the cycles of contention. Second, we intend to discern the roles intelligence operations have historically played in counterinsurgency campaigns and whether there are lessons that can be learned from these experiences that can be applied to contemporary counterinsurgency efforts. It should be noted that, while in both instances the counterinsurgent is a liberal state, we intend for our model to apply across the full spectrum of state and regime types. We recognize that liberal democracies will likely face greater political and legal constraints for both intelligence collection and repression selection and may be forced to act reactively to insurgency in almost every instance. That said, we are principally concerned herein with the lessons that liberal governments may learn when they must react to insurgency at home and abroad since these governments are our target audience.

By process tracing, we mean a method that attempts to "identify the intervening causal process...between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable."<sup>1</sup> In choosing this method, we seek to convert the "historical narratives" of the Vietnam and Northern Ireland cases into "an analytical causal

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, (Boston: The MIT Press, 2005), 206.

explanation couched in explicit theoretical forms.”<sup>2</sup> Our theoretical model stipulates that intelligence both informs and is sensitive to a state’s repression policy, which in turn impacts on the intensity and durability of a given insurgency as well as the prospects for future intelligence. Process tracing requires us to build historical narratives of each case that identify the general flow of events as well as the specific characteristics of policy maker decisions, implementation of repression policy, the composition and activities of the state’s intelligence apparatus, and the intensity and durability of the insurgency. Since our model “implies predictions about causal processes that lead to outcomes,” process tracing will allow us to test whether events in our historical narratives substantiate Hafez’s claim that repression type and timing impact upon the intensity and durability of a given insurgency and our assertion that the available menu of repression available to the counterinsurgent is a function of the intelligence he has available.<sup>3</sup> Given the multiple causal linkages that we develop in our model, process tracing is the most appropriate research methodology as it provides for the detailed historical analysis that connects the multiple variables of intelligence, repression selection, and the ebb and flow of insurgency intensity and durability. Echoing another scholar utilizing the process trace methodology, this technique is appropriate for our attempt to explain the role of intelligence on repression, and of repression on the insurgency in that it allows us to determine “*which* aspects of the initial conditions observed, in conjunction with *which simple principles* of the many that may be at work, would have *combined* to generate the observed sequence of events.”<sup>4</sup>

This study will examine the cases of the United States’ counterinsurgency efforts during the Vietnam War and Great Britain’s campaign in Northern Ireland from 1969-1998. In each, the counterinsurgent strategy was informed by the same or similar liberal democratic values and policies as the U.S. and her allies expect for their future. As such, the lessons we may draw are more likely to be relevant and useful to our own future counterinsurgent efforts. Aside from these liberal democratic policies, each case also

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<sup>2</sup> Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, (Boston: The MIT Press, 2005), 211.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>4</sup> Jack Goldstone, quoted in George and Bennett, 206. Emphasis in the original.

endured over a relatively long period of time, allowing for a process of dynamic learning in the strategic choices of the counterinsurgent. The U.S. counterinsurgency effort in Vietnam has been chosen as an example of the counterinsurgent as a third party to the state – counter-state conflict, while the case of Great Britain’s involvement in Northern Ireland has been chosen as an example of domestic counterinsurgency. These cases are being examined independent of, but complementary to each other and process tracing will allow us intra-case comparisons by way of temporal distinctions. If transferable lessons do indeed exist, they will be useful to strategic and operational level policy makers as well as the military and law enforcement officials charged with prosecuting current and future counterinsurgency intelligence operations.

In this thesis, we assert that the intensity and durability of any emergent insurgency is a function of state repression selection *a la* Hafez, the available menu of which is itself a function of the type of intelligence enjoyed by the state. Furthermore, we assert that Hafez’s notion of the efficacy of preemptively timed and selectively targeted repression is not merely a repression policy choice, but that due to the role of intelligence in informing repression selection, such a strategy is a function of the counterinsurgent’s intelligence policy as well.

To support these assertions, we will seek to answer two general research questions. Does empirical evidence exist that supports the credibility of our extension of Hafez’s model? And In the context of this model, what practical intelligence policy and operational lessons exist that are advantageous to the counterinsurgent?

The first of these we will answer by way of process tracing within each of our case studies. This method in turn requires that we answer the following focused research questions: First, is there empirical evidence suggesting that state intelligence type informs the available menu of repression selection? Second, is there empirical evidence suggesting that subsequent repression policy influences emergent insurgent movement intensity and durability? Finally, is there empirical evidence suggesting that repression policy choices informed subsequent intelligence policy and operational changes?

Chapter VI will be dedicated to discussing the implications of our findings and presenting our recommendations for future research and policy as a result of this study.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this section, we will offer a simple definition of what we mean here forth in referring to “insurgency.” This allows us to clearly enumerate the scope of our investigation. We will also touch briefly on the arena in which the insurgent and counterinsurgent fight for domination.

### A. INSURGENCY DEFINED

Most definitions of insurgency can agree on two characteristics: that they are political struggles for power and that they are conducted, at least in part, through the use of violence. Joes defines it as “an attempt to overthrow or oppose a state or regime by the force of arms.”<sup>5</sup> Jones and Libicki seek to qualify the nature of both the state and the insurgent with “armed conflict that pits the government and national army of an internationally recognized state against one or more armed opposition groups able to mount effective resistance against the state.”<sup>6</sup> Scott et al add temporal and tactical qualifications when they write, “insurgency...refers to efforts to obtain political goals by an organized and primarily indigenous group (or groups) using protracted, irregular warfare and allied political techniques.”<sup>7</sup> O’Neill attempts to be more inclusive by noting the actors, means, and objective. He writes,

Insurgency can be defined as a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the former consciously employs political resources (organizational skills, propaganda, and/or demonstrations) and instruments of violence to establish legitimacy for some aspect of the political system it considers illegitimate.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency*, (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qaeda*, (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2008), 31-32.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew M. Scott, et al, *Insurgency*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1970), 5.

<sup>8</sup> Bard E. O’Neill, *Insurgency in the Modern World*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), 1.

We contend that though violence, typically in the form of guerilla warfare, is a necessary characteristic of any insurgency, simply defining an insurgency as a violent attempt to overthrow or oppose a state, as proposed by Joes and Jones and Libicki, ignores the mechanisms used by the insurgents to generate the resources (in the form of people, materials, cohesive ideologies, and activities) necessary to mount a credible challenge to the incumbent regime. Reliance on this latter definition will not allow the counterinsurgent to pay sufficient attention to the full spectrum of issues necessary to thwart the insurgency and instead focus the counterinsurgent on only the “fielded” forces of the insurgent. Scott et al come closer to a fuller representation of these enabling mechanisms by noting the “allied political techniques,” yet do not define the groups in contention, leading potential analysts to focus too heavily on the insurgent, whom, as we will see, comprises only one third of the insurgency equation.

O’Neill’s definition, informed as it is by Social Movement Theory, treats insurgency as essentially a violently contentious socio-political movement. In doing so it allows for a succinct description that captures the players, means, and goals and provides a stepping off point for a more complete analysis of the insurgent/counterinsurgent milieu. As such, it is this more inclusive definition, informed by tenets common to Social Movement Theory, which we use in this study.

## **B. THE MECHANICS OF AN INSURGENCY**

### **1. Social Movement Theory**

Insurgencies occur through human agency, not simply through the presence of favorable conditions. Social Movement theorists such as Doug McAdam and others offer an explanation of how conditions ripe for insurgency can be manipulated by political actors and describe the mechanisms used to turn disaffected individuals into a coordinated mass movement against an incumbent regime. Social movement theory describes three factors that impact on the “emergence and development of social movements/revolutions” and include Political Opportunity Structures, Mobilizing

Structures, and Framing Processes.<sup>9</sup> Taken together, these factors describe the context that can give rise to insurgencies, the mechanisms which transform favorable societal conditions into collective action, and the messages and ideologies that transform individual grievances into a collectively identified set of problems and an affiliated call for action.

*a. Political Opportunity Structures*

McAdam describes political opportunity structures as the set of political constraints and opportunities unique to a national context that shape social movements and revolutions.<sup>10</sup> Political opportunity structures describe those conditions within a society's political and economic environment that, if sufficiently permissive, may create a context ripe for social unrest, mobilization, and insurgency. Social disequilibrium resulting from a growing gap between a society's values and the state's policies opens the door to either opportunities or constraints for the state and emergent movements.<sup>11</sup> As societies change, leaders must react in a manner which rebalances the political and/or economic structure of the state with the expectations and values of the population. To the degree that this occurs, social equilibrium is maintained and the political opportunity structure within that society is closed in that actively contrarian competition from violent movements is unlikely. In such cases social and political systems are frequently sufficiently open to popular participation, and groups seeking change have the access necessary, to the degree that their value sets require, to bring about satisfactory reforms and maintain social equilibrium through participatory rather than violent means.

If, however, those in power are not responsive to societal change, and social values and state policies become de-synchronized, social disequilibrium results and political opportunity structure for emergent contentious political movements opens. That

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<sup>9</sup> Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Meyer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2.

<sup>10</sup> Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Meyer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>11</sup> Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982), 59, 73.

is, the inability of individuals and groups to pursue their interests through lawful participation may lead them to pursue these interests by other means, including, at one extreme, replacing the political structure that is perceived as antagonistic. In this sense, constraints on popular participation create opportunity for the insurgent. Widespread social disequilibrium and a sense that the incumbent regime is the source of the value-environment dissynchronization can provide contentious political movements the open political opportunity necessary to mobilize resources and attempt a change of the social and political order.<sup>12</sup>

### ***b. Mobilizing Structures***

For latent grievances to be manifested as collective action, mechanisms must exist to organize individuals, gather resources, and expend those resources in a coordinated effort towards changing the social and political status quo. McAdam terms these mechanisms “mobilizing structures” and defines them as “those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action.”<sup>13</sup> Mobilizing structures operate at three distinct, but interrelated levels of analysis. Micro-level mobilizing structures consist of families, networks of friends, and neighborhoods. Meso-level mobilizing structures consist of movement recruiters and inter-group brokers. Macro-level mobilizing structures consist of movement leaders and strategists. McCarthy notes that micro-level mobilizing structures are the “most basic structures of everyday life” where “much local dissent is built.”<sup>14</sup>

Passy posits that micro-level mobilizing structures fulfill three functions related to individual mobilization towards collective action.<sup>15</sup> These include a socialization function where the collective identities of groups of individuals are built,

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<sup>12</sup> See Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982) and Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970) for information regarding the concepts of societal dissynchronization and relative deprivation.

<sup>13</sup> Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Meyer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>15</sup> Florence Passy, “Social Networks Matter, But How” in *Social Movements and Networks*, Mario Diani and Doug McAdam (Eds), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 24-26.



solidified, and shaped, enabling them to interpret reality from a collective worldview and define collective action as appropriate for this interpretation. Second, micro-level mobilizing structures serve a structural-connection function by “connecting prospective participants to an opportunity for mobilization and enabling them to convert political consciousness into action.” While this is also a function of meso-level mobilizing structures, at the micro-level this function is realized when members of a family or friend network become involved in collective action, serving as both an exemplar and vehicle for others in their network to become mobilized. Related to this is the decision-shaping function of mobilizing structures. Passy writes that “the decision to join collective action is influenced by the action of other participants.”<sup>16</sup> Collective action, particularly in the form of a violently contentious insurgent movement, entails a number of significant risks; fear of which must be overcome by the individual to successfully induce their commitment to the cause. Individuals must perceive that not only does the insurgency stand a reasonable chance for success, but also that their involvement is necessary for this success.<sup>17</sup> By way of proximity to movement participants already committed to the cause and engaged in collective action, micro-level networks shape the decisions of potential recruits, making them more likely to mobilize.

Meso-level mobilizing structures interact with the micro-level in that they link like-minded social networks to those movement organizations capable of leading and mobilizing disparate groups towards collective action. Diani refers to meso-level mobilizing structures as “connective structures” whose role it is to “link leaders and followers, center and periphery, and different parts of a movement sector, permitting coordination and aggregation between movement organizations.”<sup>18</sup> Meso-level mobilizing structures consist of locally rooted cadres or brokers who connect formal movement leadership to diverse bases of popular support providing the greater movement with the manpower and resources necessary to conduct local insurgent activity. These

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<sup>16</sup> Florence Passy, “Social Networks Matter, But How” in *Social Movements and Networks*, Mario Diani and Doug McAdam (Eds), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 25.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Mario Diani quoted in Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 124.

brokers also serve to “connect actors who are not communicating because of some specific political or social barrier,” essentially linking isolated insurgent sub-groups in order to coordinate efficient resource exchange and collective activities.<sup>19</sup> The strength of meso-level mobilizing structures lies in the degree of their local embeddedness. Connected to the micro-level networks of families, friends, and neighborhoods where common perceived grievances are identified and dissent is generated, these mobilizing structures connect discreet groups both with each other and with formal, hierarchical insurgency leadership who will provide resources and guidance for collective action against the state. Eric Wendt cleanly summarizes the role and identity of meso-level mobilizing structures, stating, “If a villager wants to give support (people, guns, or money) to a cause, who, by name, in the village or neighborhood is the insurgents’ point of contact for transferring those resources? That individual is a member of the infrastructure.”<sup>20</sup>

Tarrow notes that “without some degree of organization, although movements can reach great degrees of contention, they frequently fade away or dissipate their energies.”<sup>21</sup> He goes on to identify successful insurgent groups as those who are “based on partly autonomous and contextually rooted local units linked by connective structures, and coordinated by formal organizations.”<sup>22</sup> This formal organization is the realm of macro-level mobilizing structures. Consisting of movement leadership, it is the macro-level mobilizing structures that craft strategy, seek and identify resources, set and execute objectives, and provide the ideological foundation for the diagnosis of the source of social disequilibrium and prescription for socio-political rebalancing. Macro-level mobilizing structures not only set the agenda of the insurgency, but also are its most visible face, issuing communiqués and frequently engaging in other media-intensive activities. These mobilizing structures often take the form of political parties or shadow

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<sup>19</sup> Mario Diaini, *Social Movements and Networks*, 106.

<sup>20</sup> Eric P. Wendt, “Strategic Counterinsurgency Modeling” from *Special Warfare* 18 no 2 (September 2005), 3.

<sup>21</sup> Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 124.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

governments that may emerge in areas of high social disequilibrium and displace incumbent government control regimes with their own that legislate, adjudicate, and conduct taxation. Arguably, however, the most significant function of the macro-level mobilizing structures is the crafting of coherent and durable strategic frames.

*c. Strategic Framing*

Strategic framing is the process of creating “interpretive schemata that offer a language and cognitive tools for making sense of experiences and the ‘world out there.’”<sup>23</sup> This process serves to address how “individual participants conceptualize themselves as a collectivity; how potential participants are actually convinced to participate; and the ways in which meaning is produced, articulated, and disseminated by movement actors through iterative processes.”<sup>24</sup> Snow and Benford identify three key framing tasks:

First, movements construct frames that diagnose a condition as a problem in need of redress. This includes attributions of responsibility and targets of blame. Second, movements offer solutions to the problem, including specific tactics and strategies intended to serve as remedies to ameliorate injustice. And third, movements provide a rationale to motivate support and collective action.<sup>25</sup>

As used by insurgency, strategic framing is that mechanism which identifies that social disequilibrium exists, identifies a target (the state) as the source of both grievances and impediment to change, and prescribes a solution (change in the socio-political order). To be effective, however, frames must resonate with the population targeted for mobilization. Wiktorowicz notes that frames utilizing commonly understood cultural symbols, language, and identities, and are articulated by credible and reputable sources, will resonate and enhance mobilization.<sup>26</sup> In addition to being culturally consistent, however, prescriptive frames must be both culturally and

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<sup>23</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz (ed), *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 15.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Wiktorowicz, 16.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

contextually acceptable if they hope to mobilize significant popular participation in high risk activity, such as insurgent politics or guerilla warfare. If prescriptive frames are inconsistent with societal values, the popular base will have difficulty linking these to existing grievances in numbers sufficient for mass mobilization. Likewise, if lower risk prescriptions are seen as viable, then the prescriptive frame is contextually irrelevant and will likely achieve little resonance.

Thus far, we have engaged in a simple discussion of contextual factors influencing the rise and direction of contentious political movements. As Doug McAdam notes regarding the interplay between political opportunity structures, mobilizing structures, and strategic framing, “the problem is there exists many relationships between our three factors.”<sup>27</sup> The same can be said for the presence, or lack, of such conditions as social disequilibrium, relative deprivation, and the near limitless panoply of other concepts in the study of the sources of insurgency. None of the previously described factors and mechanisms is alone sufficient to result in insurgency. Social systems are complex, and contentious movements that arise within them are, as Kilcullen says, “complex and adaptive...whose behavior results from the interactions and relationships between the entities that make up the *system in focus* and the *environment*.”<sup>28</sup> However, for an insurgency as we define it, to emerge and engage in sustained violent conflict with a state, all of these factors must necessarily exist and interact with one another in some manner.

As described, insurgencies can emerge when social disequilibrium is exploited by a contentious political movement seeking to change the political, social, and economic status quo, through force if necessary. This, then, is the environment and challenger with which the counterinsurgent must contend. In order to effectively meet this challenge, the counterinsurgent must understand insurgent structure and operations,

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<sup>27</sup> Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Meyer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 7.

<sup>28</sup> David J. Kilcullen, “Countering Global Insurgency,” *Small Wars Journal*, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/kilcullen.pdf> (accessed 9 September, 2008), 22. Emphasis in the original.

and, based on this understanding, formulate an appropriate strategy that will successfully reduce the threat. We will offer a model that provides a conceptual basis for successful counterinsurgent strategy. We will also address the repressive, or coercive, component of counterinsurgent strategy using Mohammad Hafez's typology of repression.

### **C. THE MECHANICS OF COUNTERINSURGENCY**

Because the nature of insurgency as an intra-societal struggle for the mantle of governance is so different from the inter-state conflicts characterizing conventional warfare, counterinsurgency theorists continuously remind us of Clausewitz's maxim that statesmen and strategists must understand the type of war into which they are entering, and not try to mistake it for, or turn it into, something that it is not.<sup>29</sup> That said, there exists a general consensus in counterinsurgency literature that the population is the center of gravity for both the insurgent and counterinsurgent and it is for their allegiance that both sides must direct their efforts. Apart from the most authoritarian and ruthlessly repressive of regimes, who abide no dissent and quell insurgencies in their infancy, most regimes rely on the allegiance, or at least the acquiescence of their populations to function capably as a state; sovereign within defined borders and providing for the safety and advancement of their society, while promoting policies that manage social equilibrium.

When a state is challenged by insurgency, that state must rely upon the population to provide information on the insurgents, resist or fight against the insurgents, and peacefully engage in political processes to bring the policy environment back in line with societal values. The insurgent, in turn, relies on the population for infrastructure support, or at the very least passive acquiescence. This allows them to avoid the repressive apparatuses of the state long enough to engage their mobilizing structures towards the end of direct and open contention for political control. Indeed, the *raison d'être* of any insurgency is found in their claim to represent societal values to a greater degree than does the sitting government; thus their appeal to and reliance on the population.

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<sup>29</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 88.

## 1. The Population-Centric Strategy

To successfully defeat competitors and, at the same time defend against them, the counterinsurgent state, in the context of a population-centric conflict, must craft a strategy that enhances its own legitimacy with and control over the contested population, while at the same time undermining the insurgent's legitimacy and control over the same population base.<sup>30</sup> McCormick proposes a population-oriented model dubbed the Diamond Model (see Figure 1. The Diamond Model), that can serve as a guide for effective counterinsurgent strategy. This model proposes an "indirect" approach to counterinsurgency necessitated by the fact that, while the counterinsurgent may possess a force advantage over the insurgent, the insurgent possesses an information advantage which hampers the counterinsurgent force advantage.<sup>31</sup> In order for the counterinsurgent to benefit from his force advantage, he must first overcome the insurgent's information advantage and be able to find the insurgent amongst the greater population.<sup>32</sup> Herein lays the indirect approach: in order for the counterinsurgent to gain information superiority, he must first gain control over the population, who can provide the counterinsurgent with "actionable intelligence needed to be effective in killing or capturing members of the insurgent infrastructure."<sup>33</sup>

As this model illustrates, the first goal of the counterinsurgent is to gain the support of the population (Leg 1). The counterinsurgent accomplishes this goal through both consensus (political, economic, and social strategies that enhance the legitimacy of the state and undermine insurgent strategic frames) and coercion (in the form of population control and security measures).<sup>34</sup> To the degree the counterinsurgent has

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<sup>30</sup> Eric P. Wendt, "Strategic Counterinsurgency Modeling" from *Special Warfare* 18 no 2 (September 2005), 5. For our purposes, we will only be discussing the top half of the Diamond Model which directly relates to the interaction between the counterinsurgent, population, and insurgent. The lower half, which we do not discuss, relates to the relationship between the international community (external actors), the counterinsurgent, and the insurgent, respectively.

<sup>31</sup> Gordon McCormick, "Course Introduction and Preliminary Concepts," Seminar in Guerrilla Warfare. Lecture (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, July 2007).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Wendt, 5.

<sup>34</sup> Gordon McCormick, "Leaders, Followers, and Organizations," Seminar in Guerrilla Warfare. Lecture (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, July 2007).

established control over the population; he has degraded the insurgent's linkages and may now benefit from the resources, allegiance, and intelligence that can be extracted from the population while stymieing the insurgent's efforts to do the same.<sup>35</sup> This allows that counterinsurgent to address Leg 2 of the Diamond Model, which consists of extracting information on the nature and locations of individual insurgents. Once this information is gained, the counterinsurgent may then enjoy the benefits of his force advantage vis-à-vis the insurgents and conduct direct action missions (kill, capture, coerce, co-opt) that will further dismantle the insurgency.

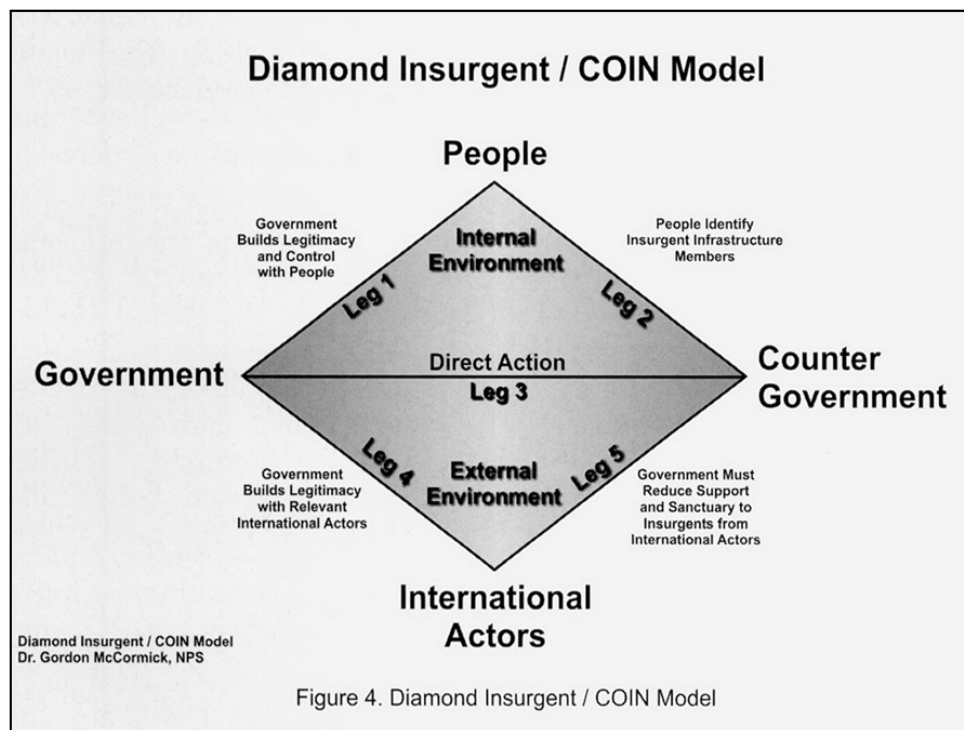


Figure 1. The Diamond Model<sup>36</sup>

The ultimate goal is the popularly bestowed mantle of legitimate governance, and all coercive and consensus building actions must be gauged against how they strengthen counterinsurgent claims to legitimacy while at the same time weakening insurgent claims. Consensus building activities directed towards the population must address the systemic

<sup>35</sup> Gordon McCormick, "Operationalizing the Insurgent/Counterinsurgent *Process*," Seminar in Guerrilla Warfare. Lecture (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, August 2007).

<sup>36</sup> Eric P. Wendt, "Strategic Counterinsurgency Modeling" from *Special Warfare* 18 no 2 (September 2005), 6.

political, economic, and social issues relevant to the population that have resulted from value-environment de-synchronization. Coercive activities directed towards the population must be conducted in a manner that creates and maintains a secure environment, is consistent with societal values, and reinforces the legitimacy of the counterinsurgent.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, by way of depicting insurgent strategic frames as bankrupt and inconsistent with societal values, decrying insurgent activities as destructive and illegitimate, and increasing popular confidence in the certainty of insurgent defeat, the counterinsurgent may aggressively undermine the coercive and consensus building activities insurgents direct towards the population.

Finally, the counterinsurgent must conduct coercive and consensus building activities directed against the insurgent. Towards the end of consensus, it is important for the counterinsurgent to keep in mind that no insurgency is a monolith, but rather, consists of sub-groups and factions who may be susceptible to invitations of participation in political arrangements satisfying in whole or in part grievances fueling the insurgency. For insurgent stalwarts beyond compromise, however, the counterinsurgent must frequently remove them by way of coercive force; identifying and interdicting the micro-, meso-, and macro-level mobilizing structures. The counterinsurgent must kill or capture those nodes conducting the day-to-day operations of the insurgency; from recruiters, to leaders and propagandists, to operatives.

The Diamond Model calls for counterinsurgent application of both coercive and consensus building measures to both the population and the insurgency. The connection between consensus building activity by the government and its effect on legitimacy building is almost intuitive. Somewhat less clear is the connection between repressive activity and its effect on popular perceptions of regime legitimacy. Popular perceptions of what constitutes morally correct means are especially important when considering a policy of repressive force employed by the counterinsurgent.

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<sup>37</sup> Eric P. Wendt, "Strategic Counterinsurgency Modeling" from *Special Warfare* 18 no 2 (September 2005), 5.



## 2. A Typology of Repression

Mohammad Hafez offers a typology of state repression that seeks to describe the effects repressive state policies have on contentious political movement emergence. Borrowing from the work of social movement theorists, Hafez defines repression as “any action taken by the authorities that ‘raises the contender’s costs of collective action.’”<sup>38</sup> By this definition, repression is a-normative and state repression may span a spectrum from restrictions on political participation or criticism of the government, to mass arrest, torture, and extra-judicial killing. According to Hafez, state repression policy can be typified by two elements; repression timing and repression target.<sup>39</sup> Repression timing refers to whether repression is applied before or after the emergence of violent contention, in which case the repression is preemptive or reactive respectively. Repression target refers to whom the state chooses to apply repression. Should the state apply without regard for the degree to which those targeted are invested in the insurgency, repression is said to be indiscriminate. Should the state limit repression to those targets actively supporting or engaged in insurgency, repression is selective.

Hafez contends that a state’s selection of repression timing and target will have profound effect on the nature and direction of contentious movement emergence. Preemptive repression will discourage insurgency, starving nascent movements of resources and support. This is accomplished by way of creating doubt among active and potential supporters and members as to whether 1) their support for the insurgency has a reasonable chance to escape state repression, 2) the insurgency has a reasonable chance for success, 3) the insurgency enjoys widespread popularity, and 4) they can trust the insurgency or its infrastructure have not been infiltrated. If, however, repression is reactive the state may allow erstwhile social movements to become violent insurgency or existing insurgencies to further radicalize. By its nature, reactive repression occurs only after the insurgent has amassed sufficient resources and popular support. Furthermore,

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<sup>38</sup> Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 71-76.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

Hafez argues that once an existent movement is existentially threatened, it will expend all available resources for survival and members will fight to protect what gains they have made.

It is important that we pause and acknowledge the components of preemptive repression, as the clear definition of how we use the term “preemptive” will be critical to our argument throughout this thesis. At the most abstract level of analysis, we speak of preemption with regard to the emergence of violence within the greater insurgency. The opportunity for preemption at this level has a discreet event horizon, beyond which opportunity for preemption is lost. At this level of analysis this occurs at the point the greater insurgency goes violent for the first time. While essential to the theoretical development of our causal chain, in practice this level of analysis has finite utility. A second level of analysis is the application of the same principle of preemption to the discreet insurgent events or activities within the conduct of the greater insurgency. That is, we can consider the application of repression to be preemptive to a particular insurgent act when the repression is applied prior to the emergence of violence in that particular instance. The term will be most commonly applied throughout our case studies in this manner. The fundamental principal of preemptivity, it should be noted, remains the same – it is the level of analysis to which the concept is applied that is distinct in this case.

Hafez cites three major effects of repression targeting on contentious movements. First, selective repression signals that only “troublemakers” are targets; dissuading potential supporters and the non-affiliated from active insurgent support in the hope of avoiding state attention. Conversely, indiscriminate repression may motivate the uninvolved to make cause with the insurgency in response to brutal state policy. As well, indiscriminate repression strengthens insurgent strategic framing; providing vivid examples for insurgent diagnostic frames condemning the state as source of societal ills and major impediment to corrective value-environment rebalancing. In this way, indiscriminate repression broadens “diffusion of ‘injustice frames’ that motivate the insurgency.”<sup>40</sup> Finally, as well as providing legitimacy to insurgent diagnostic and

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<sup>40</sup> Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 76.

motivational frames, indiscriminate repression justifies insurgents prognostic frames by portraying violence as “the ‘natural’ response to indiscriminate repression.”<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, Hafez argues that for state repression to have the intended effect of undermining insurgent legitimacy and encouraging popular dissent through non-violent, legal, and established processes, repression is best when both preemptive and selective.<sup>42</sup>

#### **D. INTELLIGENCE AND ITS RELATION TO COUNTERINSURGENCY**

As noted, we contend that the insurgency/counterinsurgency milieu is defined by the struggle for political legitimacy in a society experiencing social disequilibrium. In this struggle we stipulate that the counterinsurgent must engage all functions of its political, informational, security, and economic apparatuses in order to secure popular political legitimacy, while simultaneously dismantling the contending insurgency. This, of course, requires leadership capable of identifying underlying societal disequilibrium and devising appropriate strategy to rebalance the value-environment imbalance. Key to addressing any insurgency and informing all aspects of counterinsurgent strategy, operations, and tactics, is the state’s ability to effectively gather, analyze, and utilize appropriate intelligence. This chapter will not propose a comprehensive theory of counterinsurgent intelligence operations. Rather, we will show how the type of available intelligence informs the ability to pursue a population-based counterinsurgency strategy. What follows is a brief definition of intelligence as it relates to counterinsurgency operations. Later, by expanding Hafez’s model, we show how the counterinsurgent’s ability to navigate the intelligence cycle informs the menu of available repression choices. With this extended model we ultimately conclude that the availability of

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<sup>41</sup> Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 75.

<sup>42</sup> Hafez’s typology relates to the persuasive and coercive measures directed at both insurgent and population as identified in the Diamond Model. When preemptive and selective, repression demonstrates the use of force in a justified and responsible manner and reinforces counterinsurgent claims of moral rectitude. This, in turn, reinforces state legitimacy in popular opinion, winning for the state the population as a source of resources and information while denying this to the insurgent. In this way, preemptive and selective repression also has profound effect on the insurgent. When the population provides information to the counterinsurgent and denies safe-haven to the insurgent, the counterinsurgent is relatively more effective at targeting those nodes and links of which the insurgency is comprised. Repression of this nature also allows the counterinsurgent to exploit factions and fissures within the insurgency; allowing less radicalized elements to consider political solutions short of violence to reconcile social disequilibrium.

accurate, timely, and perhaps most importantly, relevant information is critical to the counterinsurgent's available repression options, which in turn shape the degree to which the strategic choices available are population-centric. Furthermore, initial intelligence also determines in large part the availability and quality of subsequent intelligence gained from the population, and thus subsequent strategic options.

## **1. Intelligence Defined**

There are different understandings of what constitutes "intelligence." The common British understanding specifically views intelligence as information about an adversary that he would not want you to know and that is gotten without his knowledge in a secret manner.<sup>43</sup> The American view is somewhat broader. Joint Publication 2-01, *Joint and National Intelligence Support to Military Operations*, has two entries under the definition of intelligence: 1) The product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign countries or areas; and 2) Information and knowledge about an adversary obtained through observation, investigation, analysis, or understanding.<sup>44</sup> Mark Lowenthal offers a more simple definition capturing the intent of the Joint Publication. He states that "intelligence refers to information that meets the stated or understood needs of policy makers and has been collected, processed, and narrowed to meet those needs. Intelligence is a subset of the broader category of information."<sup>45</sup> At the end of the day, any counterinsurgent, British, American, or otherwise, if following a similar population-centric counterinsurgent strategy, would seek much the same information in order to effectively battle the insurgent. However, the American definition allows us to include in the discussion of counterinsurgency intelligence the acquisition and analysis of information such as ethnographic and public opinion data which, while not gathered secretly, is collected, processed, and analyzed in order to meet the counterinsurgent's objectives.

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<sup>43</sup> UK Intelligence Community Publication, *National Intelligence Machinery*, <http://www.intelligence.gov.uk/> (accessed March 20, 2008).

<sup>44</sup> Joint Publication 2-01, *Joint and National Support to Military Operations*. (Washington D.C.: 2004), [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new\\_pubs/jp2\\_01.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp2_01.pdf) (accessed March 18, 2008).

<sup>45</sup> Mark M. Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, (Washington D.C.: CQ Press), 2.

## **2. Intelligence in Counterinsurgency**

Given the nature of the counterinsurgency/insurgency conflict, the intelligence support needed by policy makers, planners, and operators is far different from that sought by forces fighting conventional wars. Counterinsurgency operations must first have the goal of securing the population, isolating them from the insurgent, and targeting the insurgency in such a manner as to strengthen state legitimacy. Accomplishing this goal resembles law enforcement work more so than traditional military work and requires a greater compliment of law enforcement intelligence to complement that intelligence traditionally required by military operations.

Three elements peculiar to insurgency require intelligence operations distinct from typical conventional warfare; the centrality of the population, the centrality of politics, and the networked structure of insurgencies. These elements also create great challenges for states intervening as counterinsurgent on behalf of allies. Due to the violent nature of insurgencies, the inevitable desire for a “quick fix,” and the requirement in such cases to project power outside of the intervening nation’s borders, typical third-party involvement usually enjoys a strong military dimension. Often this results in a military-centric counterinsurgent effort. Most militaries, however, are neither initially equipped, nor have the appropriate mindset to seek out and acquire the types of intelligence necessary to understand and counter violent insurgency. Because of the population-centric nature of insurgency, the counterinsurgent must be intimately familiar with the society within which he operates, the cultural realities and rules of that society, and the perceptions, needs, and desires of the members of that society. As well, the counterinsurgent must seek actionable intelligence of a nature and fidelity that is distinct from that typically sought in pursuit of exclusively conventional military operations. As we will describe later, counterinsurgent operations frequently resemble police work more so than traditional military operations. Furthermore, due to the political nature of insurgency, and the fact that few insurgencies are monolithic, a high level of understanding of the sociopolitical and economic dynamics fundamental to the insurgency, as well as the identification of the main players, their positions, goals, and power bases is also critical. Insurgency must avoid the repressive powers of the state

while amassing support, building capacity, and conducting illegal activities to weaken the state. As such, it must rely on clandestine networks of a fundamentally criminal nature. The intelligence apparatus charged with understanding these dynamics and revealing the insurgent networks must penetrate society and enjoy a highly sophisticated analytical capability.

Ethnographic and law enforcement intelligence techniques are two proven counterinsurgent intelligence practices that have been waged successfully to address those key elements peculiar to insurgencies and that allow both preemptive and discriminate repression in a way that bolsters state legitimacy. Though these ideas have recently gained renewed attention and technological and academic advances have matured their practice, the fundamental concepts and practices have been applied at least since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>46</sup>

*a. Ethnographic Intelligence*

Simons and Tucker define ethnographic intelligence as “information about indigenous forms of association, local means of organization, and traditional methods of mobilization.”<sup>47</sup> Culture forms the rules and structure of social organization and indigenous networks which “offer[s] ties, connections, and linkages that double as means of recruitment, affiliation, and support,” particularly for high risk activities such as insurgency.<sup>48</sup> We know from social movement theory that mobilizing structures form the networks through which insurgencies grow and operate; with ethnographic intelligence, however, we can understand in greater detail just how these networks are formed and maintained, who belongs to them, and how positions of social power are defined and operate within a particular cultural context. That is, social movement theory describes the process of mobilization within these meso-level structures, but it is ethnographic intelligence that reveals the mechanisms by which these processes are effected in a given

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<sup>46</sup> Anna Simons and David Tucker, “Improving Human Intelligence in the War on Terrorism: The Need for an Ethnographic Capability,” report submitted to Office of the Secretary of Defense for Net Assessment (2004), 3.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

context. While Simons and Tucker argue that ethnographic intelligence is so contextually specific as to defy templates and models, they do provide broad categories of social relations upon which the counterinsurgent might focus.<sup>49</sup> In order to understand indigenous networks and social power dynamics, the counterinsurgent must collect and analyze information concerning kinship associations, neighborhood associations and school ties, religious and ritual associations, and occupational associations.<sup>50</sup>

Identifying these organizations, their key players, their aims and objectives, and the linkages and power dynamics within and between them may allow the counterinsurgent to map the “human terrain” of a society. Understanding the human terrain within a given cultural context can allow the counterinsurgent to identify indigenous perceptions regarding political opportunity structures, reveal the insurgent mobilizing structures, and decipher the meaning and relative persuasiveness of the chosen insurgent strategic frames. Identifying these components allows a state to act preemptively, either with repression if the situation warrants and the local political system allows, or with the opening up of political opportunity structures that undermine the appeal of a nascent insurgency. Ultimately, the goal is to identify those organizations that will attempt to challenge the state violently and suppress, redirect, or co-opt them before they have the opportunity. This is a goal that ethnographic intelligence supports. With regard to more traditional cultures, such as those within which the US is currently and likely to be involved in the future, Simons and Tucker note the preemptive potential of ethnographic intelligence when they write “*with* ethnographic intelligence, we could

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<sup>49</sup> Anna Simons and David Tucker, “Improving Human Intelligence in the War on Terrorism: The Need for an Ethnographic Capability,” report submitted to Office of the Secretary of Defense for Net Assessment (2004), 28.

<sup>50</sup> When referring to ethnographic intelligence, Simons and Tucker have “traditional” non-western cultures in mind. They identify non-western cultures as those where “person-to-person ties” may trump the rule of law based on codes unknown or not transparent to western observers (Simons and Tucker, 7). Additionally, modes of association and communication flow along group ties in traditional cultures as opposed to the greater individualism identified with western societies (Simons and Tucker, 7). We agree with Simons and Tucker and identify ethnographic intelligence as crucial to the contemporary counterinsurgents in our target audience, those western democracies that will likely intervene in counterinsurgencies occurring in far different societies than their own. However, as our case studies will show, even counterinsurgents indigenous to a particular society (Vietnamese officials and British soldiers) will need to develop an understanding of the modes of association and communication within the contexts of their environments since often times these factors are not intuitively understood even by co-nationalists.

ensure that, at the very least, we are as well positioned as possible to act not only with timely, tactical precision on the one hand, but also strategic finesse. This would mean we would not only be in a better position to locate individuals like Osama bin Ladin, but also be cognizant enough to prevent them from acting in the first place.”<sup>51</sup> Indeed, within the context of these traditional societies, Simons and Tucker go on to suggest that, “knowing someone’s background tells you what he intends by his acts; knowing how he has dealt with others in the past tells you how he deals with others now.”<sup>52</sup> Once a violent insurgency develops, however, identifying these components through ethnographic intelligence still holds utility in efforts to reduce the durability of the emergent insurgent movement and the counterinsurgent’s subsequent capability to repress them effectively throughout the conflict.

***b. Law Enforcement Intelligence***

While ethnographic intelligence proves invaluable to the counterinsurgent in applying repression preemptively, the complementary application of law enforcement techniques can allow for more selective targeting and provide the evidence necessary for criminal prosecution within the domestic justice system.<sup>53</sup> Referring to the recent U.S. counterinsurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, Lester Grau notes that “the S2 and G2 are involved in a form of police investigative work, specifically police investigations dealing with gangs and narcotraffickers.”<sup>54</sup> This statement is not peculiar to counterinsurgent efforts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; insurgency is fundamentally an illegal activity. Since its

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<sup>51</sup> Anna Simons and David Tucker, “Improving Human Intelligence in the War on Terrorism: The Need for an Ethnographic Capability,” report submitted to Office of the Secretary of Defense for Net Assessment (2004), 2.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>53</sup> We treat law enforcement intelligence as a subset of intelligence writ large. If intelligence, according to Lowenthal, is purposed towards an objective, our use of the term “law enforcement intelligence” is as a means of distinguishing a particular intelligence from that of other intelligence based on purported objectives. That is to say, law enforcement intelligence, as we treat it, is intelligence focused on the collection of evidence for arrest and convictions. We acknowledge the frequent distinction within law enforcement organizations between their intelligence and investigation apparatus, but here we are attempting to create a common language for our future discussion and to draw a distinction between traditional military intelligence and the intelligence needs of a counterinsurgency.

<sup>54</sup> Lester W. Grau, *Something Old, Something New: Guerrillas, Terrorists, and Intelligence Analysis*, *Military Review* 84 no. 4 (July/August 2004), 43.



activities are prescribed by the state, insurgents must frequently rely on criminal methods and associates to acquire necessary resources. The insurgent network may also share ties with organized criminal networks able to supply these resources. Additionally, since insurgents, particularly those in the infrastructure, eschew uniforms, choosing instead to live and operate among the population, police-like investigations are far more effective at identifying and targeting these individuals than are traditional military intelligence methods. Most importantly, however, law enforcement intelligence methods have been developed to support police activities.<sup>55</sup> Whether concerned with community safety or law enforcement, police activities are population-centric and inherently seek to protect civilian communities by using community-generated information to identify and prosecute perpetrators of violence and other criminal activities within the rule of law.

In the British response to the Malay Emergency, “police primacy in the fight against the insurgents was given paramount attention at the beginning of the fighting.”<sup>56</sup> This led to the creation of the Police Special Branch, staffed by Malayan Chinese detectives, whose job was to provide a durable presence in Malay communities in order to uncover and dismantle the Malay insurgent infrastructure. By this example, we see how proven police intelligence methods used to fight organized crime, black-marketeering, and smuggling can be useful to the counterinsurgent.

Categorical examples of such methods include investigative practices and community oriented policing. More specifically, police investigations place a premium on crime scene protection and reconstruction, evidence collection and forensics, witness interviews and suspect interrogations, and evidence chain-of-custody requirements.<sup>57</sup> The utility of police investigative techniques for counterinsurgency intelligence operations is twofold. First, the investigative procedures incorporated into site and material exploitation allow the counterinsurgent to identify, track and target insurgents

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<sup>55</sup> Again, our distinction is in purpose, not agency.

<sup>56</sup> Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 27.

<sup>57</sup> Al Bazzinotti and Mike Thomas, “Assessing the Criminal Dimension of Complex Environments,” *News from the Front, Center for Army Lessons Learned* July-August (2005), [call2.army.mil/products/nftf/asp/2005/July05-5.asp](http://call2.army.mil/products/nftf/asp/2005/July05-5.asp), (accessed 19 October 2005).

more selectively by way of a more developed understanding of their associations, activity, and signatures. Through witness interviews as well as paper and electronic communication trails, site exploitation can reveal those individuals with whom an insurgent associate and by what means they communicate. Quick turnaround on these leads often results in immediate follow-on operations, netting related insurgents in a self-reinforcing cycle. Treating the scene of an insurgent attack with the same care as a crime scene can lead to the collection of information that reveals how specific insurgents operate, including patterns of behavior, attack tactics, techniques, and procedures, as well as physical evidence linking individuals to specific attacks, and forensic signatures such as bomb-making techniques. Second, emphasizing evidence and data collection aids in the creation and maintenance of databases that serve to reveal the extent of the insurgency as well as provide prosecutorial evidence for criminal proceedings. Such information proves highly useful to the establishment of the rule of law, the bolstering of state legitimacy, and a strategy of selective repression.

Community oriented policing practices focus on creating a more proactive police force with greater integration within the community.<sup>58</sup> According to Oliver, community oriented policing contains three subareas: strategic oriented policing, neighborhood-oriented policing, and problem-oriented policing.<sup>59</sup> Of these, strategic and neighborhood-oriented policing prescribe practices that greatly aid counterinsurgent intelligence collection such as police stationing and patrolling practices that focus on high incident areas.<sup>60</sup> This allows the law enforcement officer to become intimately familiar with his area of responsibility, increase his contact with the population, and create an environment of conspicuous and durable legitimate authority wherein citizens will inform on wrongdoers with far less fear of retribution.<sup>61</sup> Community oriented policing methods in counterinsurgent operations also increase the number of collection assets; treating

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<sup>58</sup> Willard M. Oliver and Elaine Bartgis, "Community Policing: A Conceptual Framework," *Policing* 21 no. 3 (1998), 491.

<sup>59</sup> Cited in Jason H. Beers, "Community Oriented Policing and Counterinsurgency: A Conceptual Model," (Master's Thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2007), 16.

<sup>60</sup> Jason H. Beers, "Community Oriented Policing and Counterinsurgency: A Conceptual Model," (Master's Thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2007), 16.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

every patrol member as a HUMINT collector.<sup>62</sup> As a function of creating more collection opportunities and more collectors, community oriented policing techniques provide the level of local familiarity, atmospheric awareness, and information specificity necessary for selective repression by winnowing out insurgents from the greater, law-abiding population.

Greater emphasis on police-like intelligence requirements leads to and supports a population-centric repression strategy in two ways. First, an approach that focuses on key individuals complicit in illegal activities that are part of the insurgent repertoire allows a more selective repression policy. Second, a focus on capturing insurgents and bringing them to trial rather than simply attempting to end the insurgency through attrition reinforces the rule of law, thereby strengthening state legitimacy and appeal, while at the same time reducing that of the insurgent. Coupled with the understanding of human terrain and the ability to act preemptively that ethnographic intelligence provides, law enforcement intelligence enables the counterinsurgent to aspire to a population-centric repression policy allowing for both preemptive and selective repression.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter we have reviewed ideas of how an insurgency may be described in terms of being a violent social movement and how insurgents, utilizing those procedures described by Social Movement Theory, manipulate their environment to alter the sociopolitical system. We then focused on the counterinsurgent, reviewing a population-centric counterinsurgency strategy whose goal is to gain and maintain popular legitimacy through a mixture of persuasive and coercive activities directed at both the population and the insurgents. Finally, we discussed how preemptive and selective repression policy might allow the counterinsurgent to both combat the insurgency and build popular state legitimacy. We contend that the key to any counterinsurgent's interaction with its

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<sup>62</sup> Kyle Teamy and Jonathan Sweet, "Organizing Intelligence for Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* LXXXVI no. 5 (September-October, 2006), 25.

domestic population and insurgent competitors, and ability to act both preemptively and selectively in its repression selection, is the relevance, accuracy, and timeliness of the intelligence that allows for coherent counterinsurgent strategy.

### **III. EXPANDING THE MODEL**

#### **A. INTELLIGENCE AND THE CYCLES OF CONTENTION: CONNECTING THE DOTS**

When considering Hafez's typology of repression, one might ask why any state would choose to apply repression other than selectively and preemptively. Herein we set aside potential psychological pathology that might explain the atypical repression selections of tyrants. Instead, we assume the state to be a rational actor, and as such posit regime constraints with regard to repression type selection as a function of available intelligence. To the degree that a regime is capable, by way of adequate and appropriate intelligence, of conducting selective and preemptive repression, it will.

Working within the bounds of this assumption, we expand upon Hafez's typology and develop a model of causality within the cycle of contentious politics. We posit that the intelligence a given state enjoys with regard to a nascent insurgent movement will ultimately determine the initial movement intensity and potential durability. Furthermore, the degree to which this initial intelligence is improved upon or degraded will, by way of dynamic and continuous feedback loops, determine the duration, and ultimately the success or failure of the insurgency.

#### **1. Typology of Repression and Movement Emergence**

As it forms the foundation of our causal argument, we will begin with Hafez's typology of repression. Hafez provides us with two potential targets and two possibilities for timing of repression. Considered together, these provide a matrix of four possible repression types (see Figure 2. Typology of Repression) available to any counterinsurgent in fighting potential insurgents. Of these, Hafez identifies Type 1 (Selective/Preemptive) as most desirable for counterinsurgent success. Type 4 (Indiscriminate/Reactive), Hafez argues, is the least desirable. As expected then, Type 2 and Type 3 are neither as desirable as Type 1 nor as undesirable as Type 4.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 71-76.

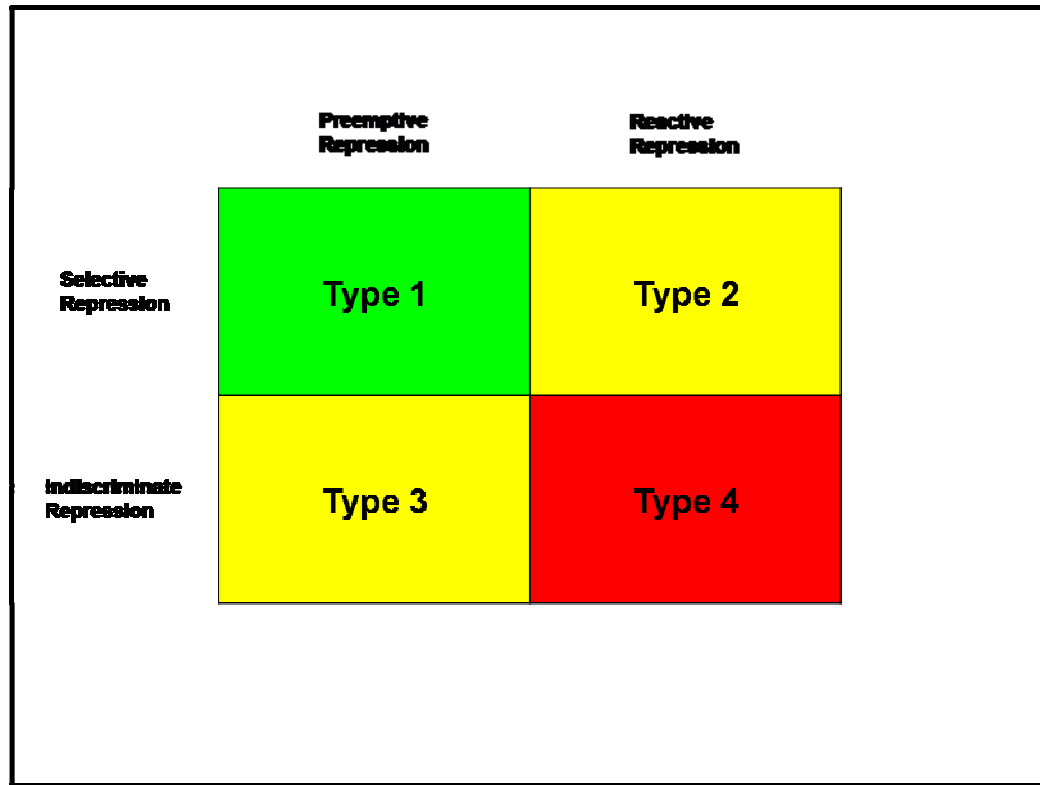


Figure 2. Typology of Repression<sup>64</sup>

Lee applies Hafez's typology in explaining the character of movement emergence within the context of state repression policy. By selectively targeting the active movement at the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels before the movement has the opportunity to gain significant traction, Type 1 repression serves several purposes. First, by preemptively closing the political opportunity available to the movement, Type 1 repression reduces the ability to build effective leadership and mobilizing structures at the macro- and meso-levels of the movement respectively. Second, without effective meso-level mobilizing structures and strong macro-level strategic framing, and as a result of continued selective targeting pressure, Type 1 repression limits the efficacy of current and reduces the potential for future support at the micro- and meso-levels. Finally, as a result of being both preemptive and selective, Type 1 repression both undermines movement strategic frames and supports counterinsurgent legitimacy, both of which

<sup>64</sup> Doowan Lee, "Repression Types," Theory and Practice of Social Revolution, Lecture (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, July 2008).

serve to further discourage movement participation and support at the micro-level periphery. As a result, Lee contends that Type 1 repression will result in the emergence (if any) of a movement that has both relatively lesser intensity and potential for durability (see Figure 3. Movement Emergence Intensity and Durability).<sup>65</sup>

Conversely, Type 4 repression will be relatively less likely to reduce the movement at the meso- and macro-levels to any great degree, while at the same time it will increase the political opportunity for movement success, the effectiveness of movement framing, and the pool of sympathetic support and recruitment at the micro-level and periphery. In Lee's model, such repression will necessarily lead to the emergence of a movement that is both more intense initially and bearing greater potential for future durability.<sup>66</sup>

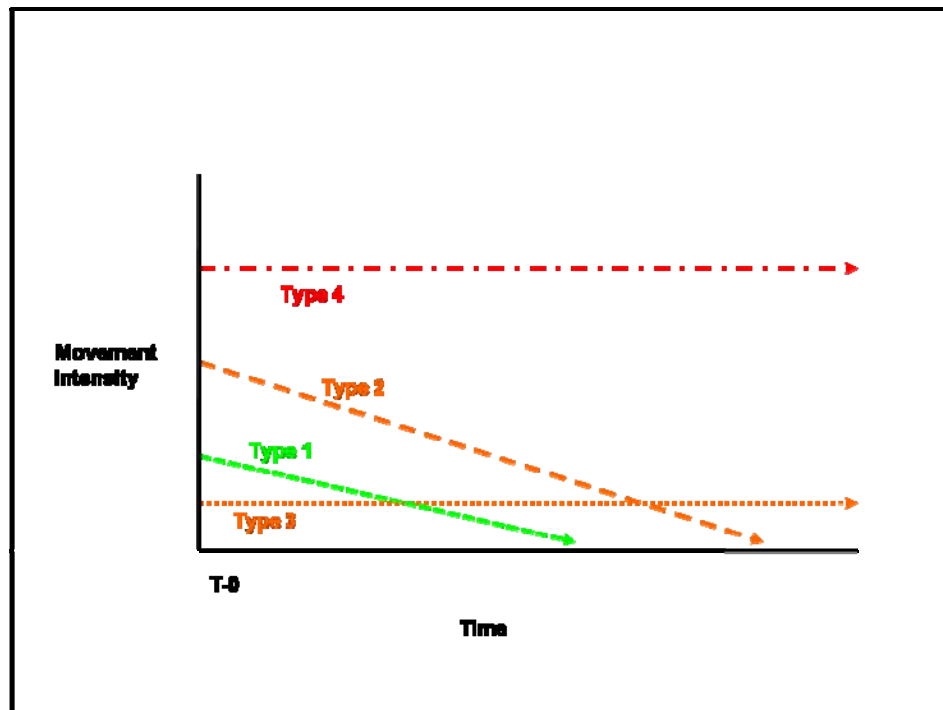


Figure 3. Movement Emergence Intensity and Durability<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Doowan Lee, "Repression Types," Theory and Practice of Social Revolution, Lecture (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, July 2008).

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

Type 2 repression, while selective and thus more likely to eliminate active movement participants at the meso- and macro-levels, is nonetheless reactive and thus risks being too little too late. That is to say that Type 2 repression is exercised after the movement has been afforded the opportunity to gain traction, emerge, and threaten the regime. At this point in the movement's lifecycle, mobilization and framing has proven successful enough within a context of relatively high political opportunity to create a solvent movement capable of posing a credible threat. That said, selective meso- and macro-level reduction proves beneficial in two regards. First, and most obvious, the purging of movement macro- and meso-level leadership limits the movement's continued ability to implement effective strategic framing and mobilizing structures respectively. Second however, is the way in which selective targeting undermines movement diagnostic and prognostic framing while at the same time reinforcing counterinsurgent popular legitimacy. Nevertheless, movement success thus far has created a moderate sense of potential for future success within active and potential participants at both the meso- and micro-levels. Even should the regime successfully execute Type 2 repression at this point, the movement has become established and may survive a reduction of the meso- and macro-levels until active participants can emerge and rise to fill the ranks. Lee sees such repression resulting in the emergence of movements that enjoy an initial intensity second only to those emerging as a result of Type 4 repression, though the potential for durability is ultimately reduced from that of Type 4 as a product of repression target selectivity.

Type 3 repression, like Type 2 repression, is middle ground in that it is neither as desirable nor as undesirable as Types 1 and 4 respectively. On one hand, the indiscriminate nature of Type 3 repression is more likely to increase the effectiveness of strategic framing and the pool of sympathetic supporters at the micro-level. Indeed, the underlying contextual grievances are not only left without redress, but are exacerbated. On the other hand, the benefit to Type 3 repression is found in its preemptive nature. By conducting its repression preemptively, the regime limits the political opportunity of a nascent insurgent movement before it gains sufficient traction and becomes a threat. Effective recruiting and mobilization of the micro-level by the meso-level is significantly



curtailed and the perception of movement success is somewhat more limited at the periphery. Movement strategic framing is, however, significantly reinforced by the indiscriminate nature of Type 3 repression targeting. As such, Lee contends that such preemptive timing results in the emergence of a relatively low level of insurgency with regard to initial intensity and participation, but one that enjoys the potential for long term durability as a result of indiscriminate targeting.

## **2. The Effects of Population-Centric Intelligence on Repression Selection**

Stepping back in the causal chain, we must consider the effects of population-centric intelligence on the choice of repression type from Hafez's menu. In exploring these effects we work under several assumptions. The first is that any insurgent movement seeking to transform the socio-political order of society is, by its very nature, a threat to the status-quo and thus forced during its emergence to remain clandestine to a degree inversely related to the strength of the regime relative to the insurgent. The second is that the population-centric intelligence enjoyed by the greater population of states in the aggregate approximates a standard normal distribution. Should we accept these two assumptions, it follows that as a result of the clandestine nature of such movements, most states enjoy only a moderate level of appropriately population-centric intelligence with regard to nascent and emerging insurgencies.<sup>68</sup> Likewise, relatively few regimes enjoy highly actionable intelligence on such clandestine movements prior to the movement achieving a level of success to credibly threaten the status-quo and similarly

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<sup>68</sup> The level and type of intelligence available to the state as well as the trajectory of the intelligence learning curve is a function of how well the state focuses its intelligence apparatus and how well the intelligence apparatus postures itself and navigates the intelligence cycle. Issues such as collection capabilities and methodologies, processing procedures and the availability of resources such as translators, analyst experience and methodologies, and the impact of institutional politics on the effectiveness of the intelligence apparatus are just some of the many issues that impact the ability of the intelligence apparatus to fulfill consumer requirements. However, this simple causal link provides a useful framework for analyzing a counterinsurgent's intelligence apparatus and allows for an investigation of the role intelligence plays in counterinsurgency case studies

few states suffer from an extreme paucity of intelligence.<sup>69</sup> We graphically depict the bands of initial intelligence among states in (see Figure 4. Bands of Intelligence).

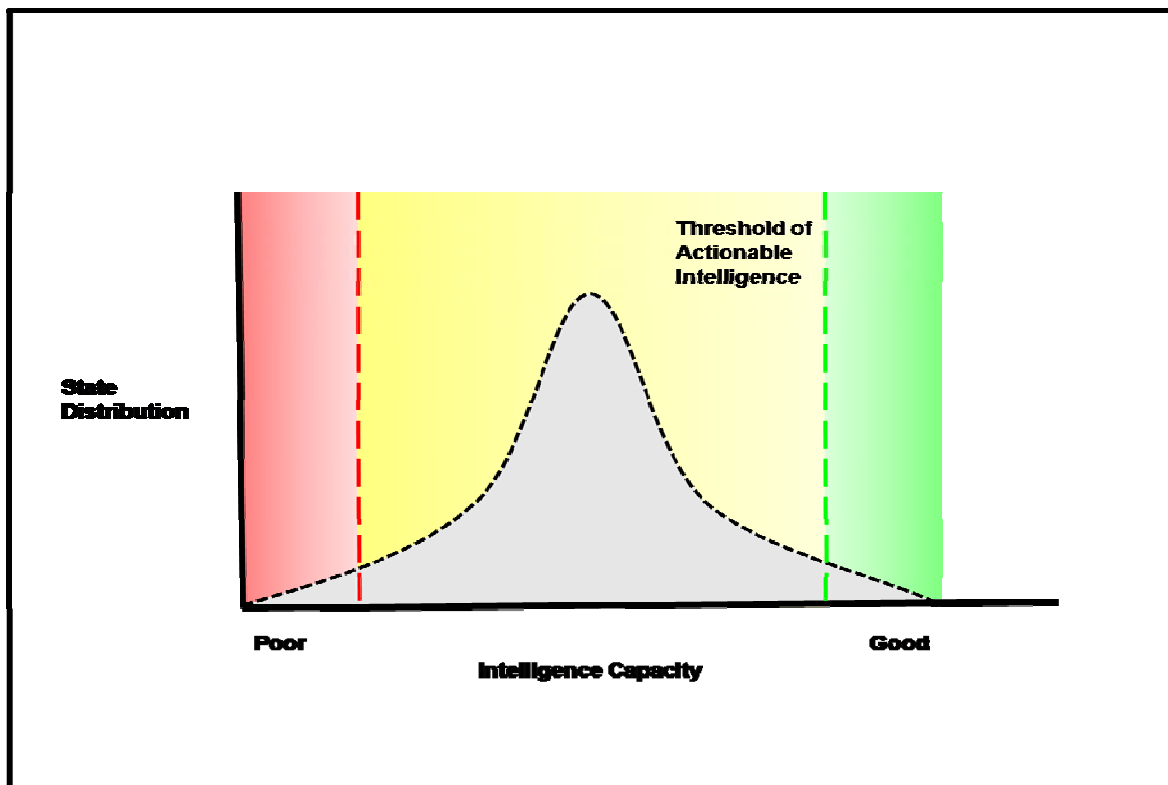


Figure 4. Bands of Intelligence

With regard to the population-centric intelligence essential to successful counterinsurgency, we relate these bands of intelligence to the intersection of law enforcement, ethnographic, and tactical military intelligence. We present this representation in terms of the relative mix of ethnographic and law enforcement intelligence practices pursued by the counterinsurgent (see Figure 5. Population-Centric Intelligence and the Bands of Intelligence). This representation presents a simple means

<sup>69</sup> We do not limit our definition of the term “actionable intelligence” to the common treatment as targeting data for the purpose of kinetic military operations. Rather, our more inclusive treatment includes within actionable intelligence quite simply any intelligence upon which action may be taken. This includes the full spectrum of means available for targeting the insurgent, from kinetic military operations to more “soft power” approaches to influence (i.e. psychological operations, civil affairs, co-optation efforts, etc...).

of considering the effects of these compatible, but distinct methods as they relate to the overall capacity of the counterinsurgent to manage intelligence with respect to the insurgent.<sup>70</sup>

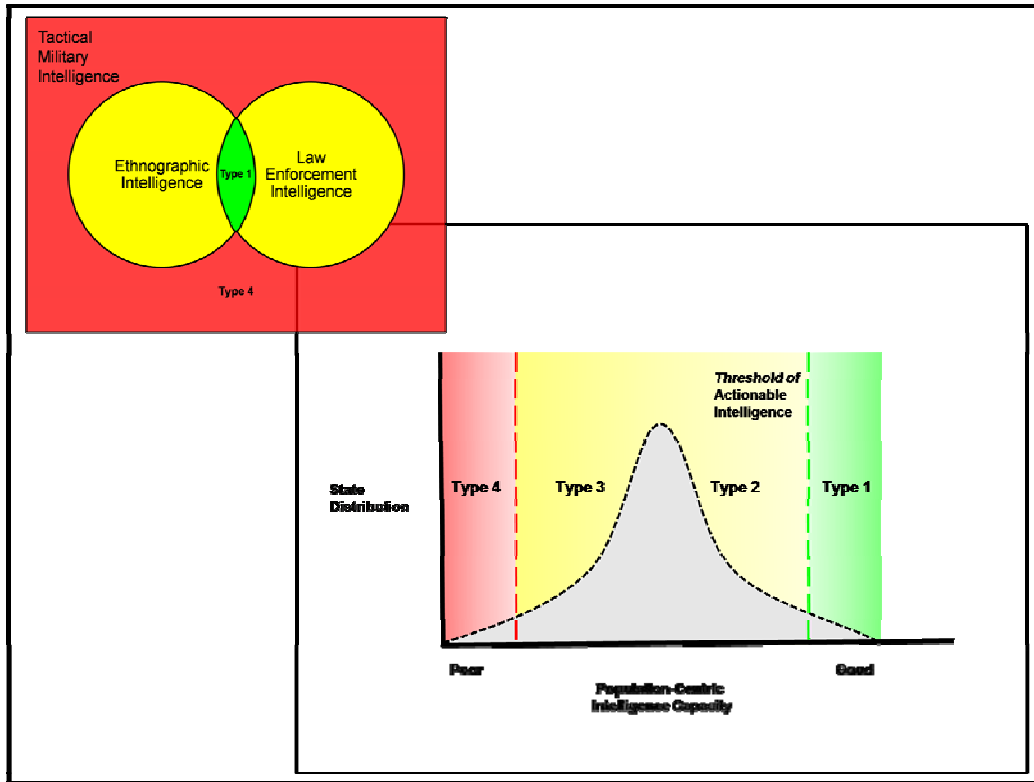


Figure 5. Population-Centric Intelligence and the Bands of Intelligence

The bands of intelligence, coupled as they are to the population-centric intelligence capacity of the state, are highly informative to the menu of repression selection as provided by Hafez. Within the context of appropriate levels of tactical military intelligence as necessary, those states employing relatively higher degrees of both ethnographic and law enforcement intelligence methods are comparatively more likely to enjoy actionable intelligence. As a result, they are more likely to know their targets prior to movement emergence and thus have the means to be both selective and preemptive in their repression (Type 1). Ethnographic intelligence allows the

<sup>70</sup> In the interest of simplicity, we present this typology which provides four types of population-centric intelligence, each of which is ultimately aligned with a type of repression a la Hafez. Much as with repression policy, however, in practice population-centric intelligence policy resembles a spectrum (as per the bands of intelligence) more so than a type, and the capacity of the counterinsurgent is a function of many variables which include, but are not limited to ethnographic and law enforcement intelligence.

counterinsurgent to “identify and locate potential opponents *before* they strike. This requires more than just deep local knowledge. It demands consistent attention to communities and networks that can only be acquired by developing long-standing local connections.”<sup>71</sup> Those states discarding population-centric intelligence methods in pursuit of strictly tactical military intelligence methods are far more likely to suffer a scarcity of intelligence and find themselves with little choice but to react to movement emergence with indiscriminate repression (Type 4).

Those states enjoying moderate levels of intelligence are faced with the choice of repressing either target or timing. That is to say that they may have insufficient intelligence to repress target prior to movement emergence and thus will be forced to either selectively repress targets reactively (Type 2), or alternately to repress movement mobilization only by way of preemptive timing, but indiscriminate with regard to target (Type 3). Simons and Tucker provide insight here as well, offering, as noted, the utility of ethnographic intelligence in allowing for preemptivity. Thus, to the degree that a counterinsurgent pursues ethnographic or law enforcement intelligence methods, it may expect to enjoy access to Types 2 and 3 repression.

By way of Hafez’s typology of repression, the bands of intelligence are directly relatable to Lee’s discussion of movement emergence intensity and durability. Indeed, Hafez’s typology is the interim link in a causal chain between population-centric intelligence policy and emergent movement intensity and potential for durability (see Figure 6).

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<sup>71</sup> Anna Simons and David Tucker, “Improving Human Intelligence in the War on Terrorism: The Need for an Ethnographic Capability,” report submitted to Office of the Secretary of Defense for Net Assessment (2004), 5.

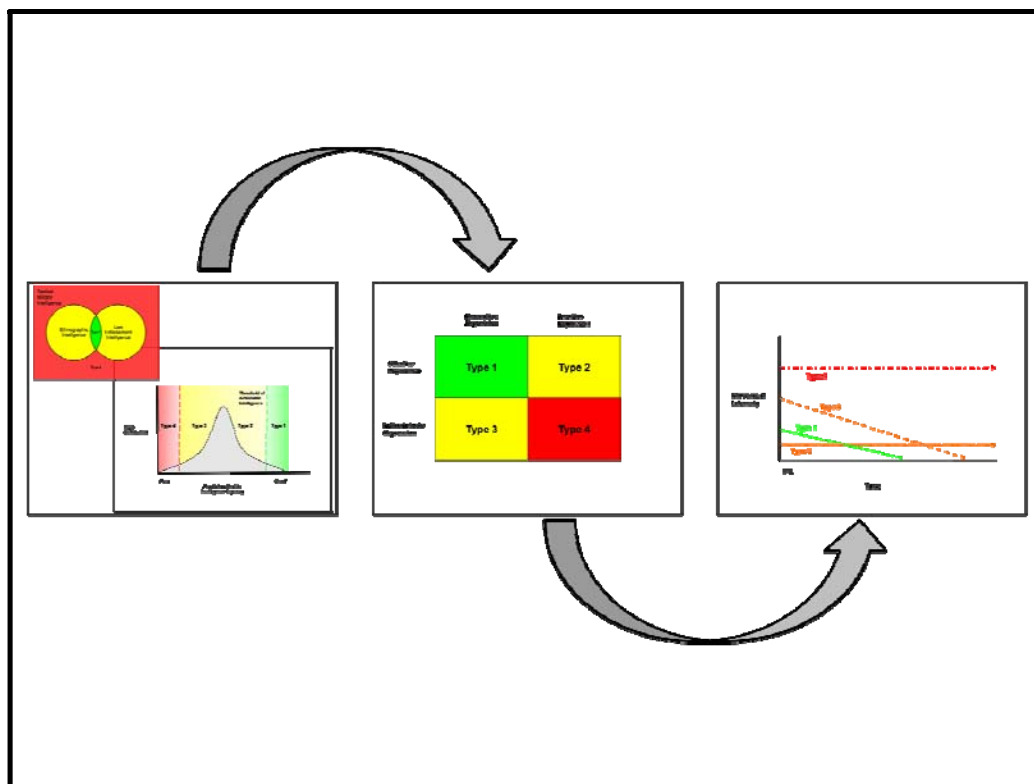


Figure 6. Population-Centric Intelligence and Movement Emergence

According to this argument, a regime with a balanced population-centric intelligence capacity enjoys actionable intelligence and commands sufficient knowledge of the movement; allowing the regime to pursue selective and preemptive repression (Type 1) at all levels of the movement. As a result, the movement, if it emerges within such a constrained political opportunity structure, suffers from poor participation and mobilization at the micro- and meso-levels. Furthermore, the perception of movement success is narrow, further limiting the active sympathetic support at the micro-level periphery. The movement is likely, under such conditions, to suffer from low initial intensity and poor prospects for future durability. The regime, in this case, benefits from its population-centric intelligence methods in the form of relatively weak and fragile insurgent movements and a low level of effective popular support for the movement.

Conversely, a regime discarding population-centric intelligence and relying instead on traditional military intelligence methods will suffer a paucity of appropriate intelligence. Such a regime may only discover the emergence of an insurgent movement

after such time as that movement has gained sufficient mobilization to pose a credible threat to the regime. In such a case, the regime may no longer act preemptively and, indeed, may very well suffer such poor intelligence as to preclude selective targeting. Such regimes find themselves faced with the choice of only indiscriminate and reactive repression (Type 4). By definition, the reactive nature of this repression has allowed the movement to grow in strength at all levels of the organization. Any closing of political opportunity that the regime may achieve at this point is after the fact, as the movement has already exploited existing opportunity to implement its mobilizing structures prior to regime repression. Furthermore, insurgent diagnostic frames defining the social disequilibrium will undoubtedly be provoked by the indiscriminate nature of Type 4 repression. Given the relative success of the movement thus far, the perception of future success will likely be high and participation and mobilization at the meso- and micro-levels will likewise be proportionally high. Under such circumstances, Type 4 repression will result in the emergence of a relatively high intensity and highly durable insurgent movement. In this case, the regime suffers from its lack of population-centric intelligence in the form of strong and resilient insurgent movements with a high level of active and effective popular support.

### **3. The Transformative Effects of Intelligence**

Heretofore we have discussed the conditions of each link in the causal chain illustrated in Figure 4 as discreet events, and how these discreet conditions bear on the subsequent link of the chain without regard to the dynamics of movement mobilization and emergence, repression selection, and the intelligence process. We have done so

intentionally to establish the fundamental correlation between each link. However, the dynamics of the intelligence cycle must be considered if we are to hope to arrive at a useful model.<sup>72</sup>

Returning once again to the output end of our causal chain, we must recognize that movement intensity and durability, as Lee identifies them, do not exist as static or predetermined characteristics of the movement following emergence. Rather, he argues for the effects that repression type selection has upon the initial intensity of the movement and the potential for durability. Dynamically, however, the continued intelligence cycle bears on the potential for future intensity and durability in movements that have mobilized and emerged.

Indeed, not only does movement feedback shape future repression selection directly, but also indirectly as it provides additional information for analysis and synthesis into actionable intelligence. The counterinsurgent intelligence capacity will continue then to shape the available menu of repression selection – which will, in turn, shape subsequent movement intensity and potential for durability throughout its lifecycle.

Should we consider these implications in terms of each repression type, we see that Type 1 repression, possible only when the counterinsurgent commands sufficient actionable intelligence, results in an intelligence learning curve that grows at an accelerated pace relative to that of other repression types. This is a function of the closed political opportunity, compromised mobilizing structures, and undermined strategic framing that Type 1 repression affords the counterinsurgent with regard to the insurgent movement (see Figure 6. The Transformative Effects of Intelligence).

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<sup>72</sup> The “intelligence cycle” is a way to think about the process used by the counterinsurgent to gather useful information and apply it to policy-making decisions, operational planning, and tactical prosecution of insurgent targets. Although the way in which we describe this cycle is a relatively new conception, the process it describes has likely existed since the dawn of warfare. The US model of the intelligence cycle comprises six steps: planning and direction; collection; processing and exploitation; analysis and production; dissemination and integration; and evaluation and feedback. Policy makers, operators, and other intelligence consumers (including intelligence agencies themselves) use this process to gather the information they need to create strategies, make decisions, plan and conduct operations, and gather further information for more refined analysis. Although simplified in a step-by-step configuration, the reality of the intelligence cycle is that it is a fluid and dynamic process and that inputs and refinements occur continuously throughout each step.

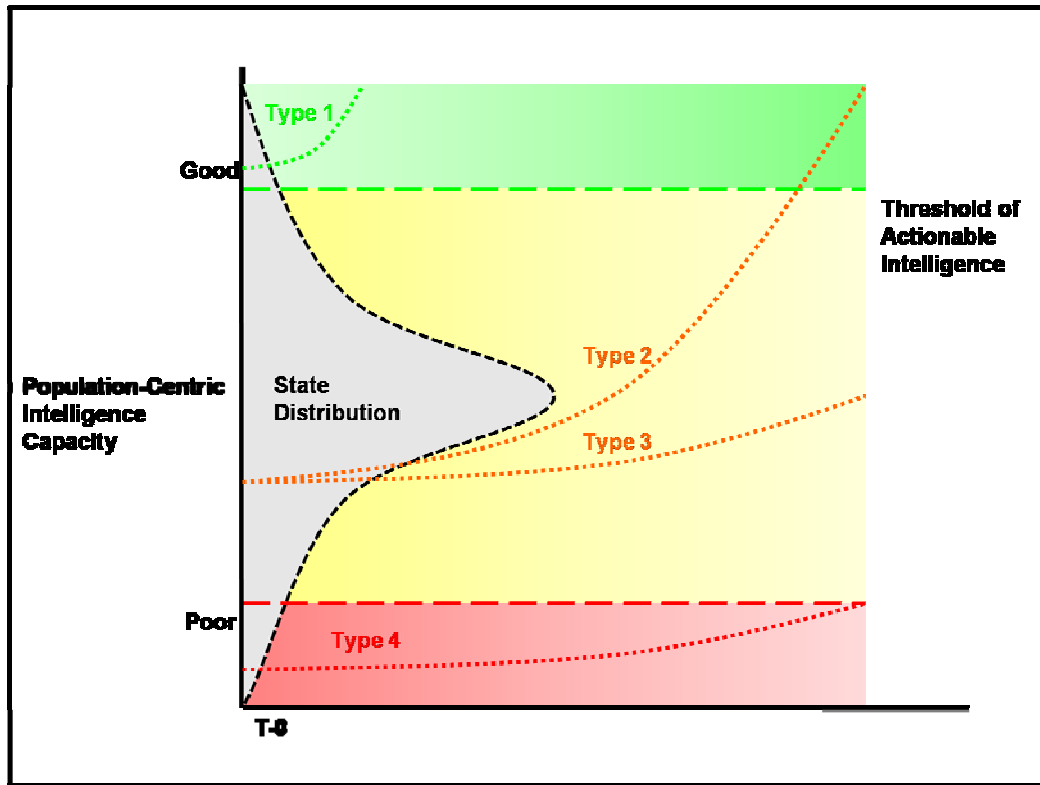


Figure 7. The Transformative Effects of Intelligence

Conversely, Type 4 repression, as a function of the paucity of population-centric intelligence, severely hampers the counterinsurgent's ability to close insurgent political opportunity and, as a function of its reactive and indiscriminate nature, bolsters the strength of insurgent mobilizing structures and strategic framing both. Consequently, the subsequent intelligence afforded the counterinsurgent following the application of Type 4 repression is unavoidably poor. The intelligence learning curve under such circumstances is relatively flat and, provided repression or intelligence policy is not changed, promises little hope for substantive improvement over time.

We are most concerned herein with repression Types 2 and 3 as we feel that these are most ubiquitous in practice. Referring again to Figure 7, we are reminded that middling intelligence allows a regime the choice of targeting or timing in its repression, but not both. That is to say, the counterinsurgent with modest intelligence may choose to act preemptively, but in doing so must necessarily be indiscriminate. Rather, the



counterinsurgent may choose to wait until such time as adequate intelligence for selective repression is available, but in doing so will only enjoy such intelligence after a nascent movement has emerged and is thus forced to repress reactively.

Should the counterinsurgent choose the former (preemptive/indiscriminate), the initial movement intensity will be necessarily lower, in relative terms, as a function of closed political opportunity and weakened prognostic frames. However, such a repression choice will strengthen the mobilizing structures and support the diagnostic strategic framing of the movement, thereby resulting in a higher potential for future movement durability. These conditions lend to a relatively flatter intelligence learning curve, which in turn limits the future menu of repression choices available to the counterinsurgent, and thus continues to foment conditions favorable to long term movement durability.

If, however, the counterinsurgent chooses repression Type 2, (reactive/selective) while the initial movement intensity will be relatively higher as a function of available political opportunity and stronger prognostic frames inherent to reactive repression, the selective nature of this repression will undermine the mobilizing structures and diagnostic frames of the movement and thus create conditions favorable to improved intelligence collection in the future. The relatively steeper intelligence learning curve, while itself an indicator of increased movement fragility, allows for an increased potential that the counterinsurgent will enjoy greater repression choices in the future.

It is our contention, that given the steeper intelligence learning curve of Type 2 repression relative to Type 3 repression, this is the more favorable repression choice available to a regime enjoying only modest intelligence on a nascent movement. That is to say, it is better to be reactive and selective than preemptive and indiscriminate. Such a selection allows a more rapid increase of available intelligence than does the selection of repression Type 3, and as a result greater potential for limiting the duration of the insurgency. We contend that the benefit of decreased movement durability over time is greater than the cost of increased initial movement intensity.

#### D. CONNECTING THE DOTS

With the addition of these feedback loops and the dynamics between intelligence and movement intensity and durability that they subsequently reflect, we have arrived at the final expression of our expansion on Hafez's typology of repression (see Figure 8. The Cycles of Contentious Politics).

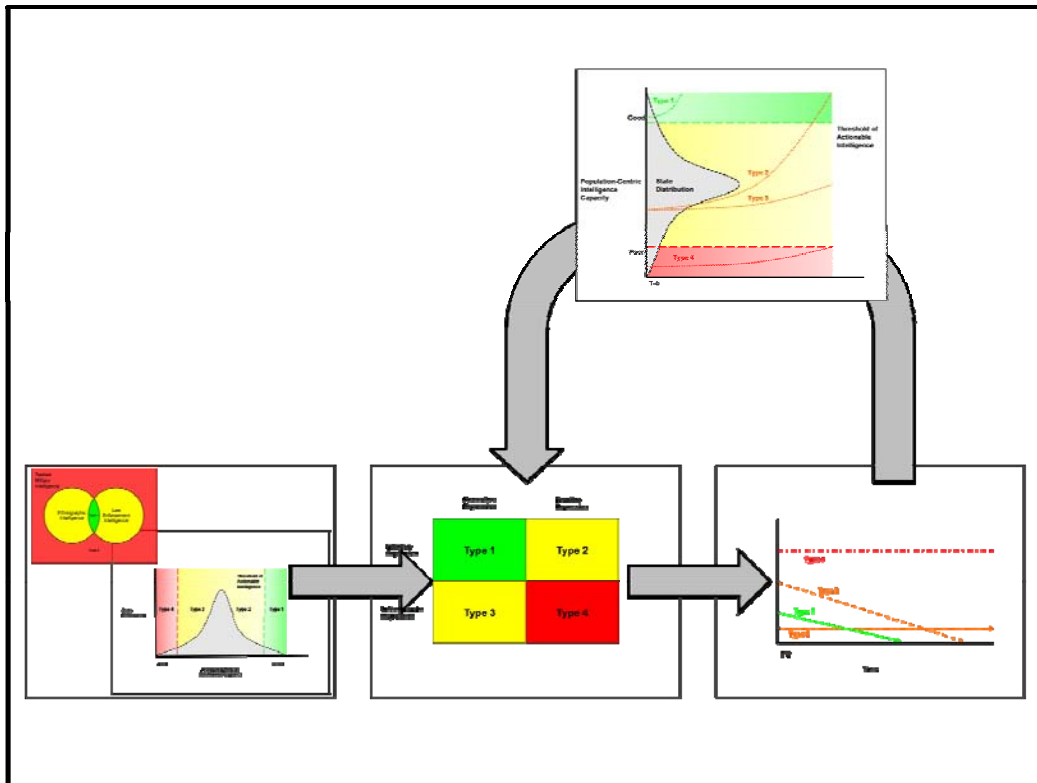


Figure 8. The Cycles of Contentious Politics

This expansion, it is hoped, illustrates the correlation between the implementation of population-centric intelligence methods and the subsequent emerging and long term intensity and durability of an insurgent movement.

## IV. CASE STUDY: VIETNAM

This chapter is dedicated to examining the role of intelligence and repression selection and their effect on the intensity and durability of the Viet Cong (VC) insurgency in South Vietnam. After presenting a succinct narrative of the Communist insurgency beginning with the Viet Minh resistance against foreign intervention, we will thoroughly examine the period starting in 1960 with the creation of the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam and ending with the 1972 withdrawal of US advisors from active support of the counterinsurgent effort. This time period has been chosen because it captures the greatest variation of the relationships between intelligence, repression policies, and resultant intensity and durability of the insurgent movement present in the South Vietnamese conflict. This period is further broken down into two sections. The first section will run from 1960 through early 1968 and represents the government's initial response to the VC insurgency. We will provide evidence of initial intelligence type and level, subsequent repression policy, and resultant intensity and durability of the insurgency. The second section will cover late 1968 through 1972 and will provide evidence on the intelligence learning curve, subsequent repression policy, and its effect on the intensity and durability of the insurgency.

### A. BACKGROUND

Vietnam had a long history with insurgency, beginning well before the United States became involved with the creation of the Indochina Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in 1950.<sup>73</sup> Communist insurgents lead by Ho Chi Minh and Vo-Nguyen Giap, who had both agitated against French colonization of Indochina before World War Two, fought the Japanese military forces that displaced the French in 1941 until the Japanese withdrawal in 1945.<sup>74</sup> The French attempted to reassert their control; however,

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<sup>73</sup> George W. Allen, *None so Blind: A Personal Account of the Intelligence Failure in Vietnam*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 15.

<sup>74</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 17.

they were quickly confronted by an organized, equipped, and experienced insurgent organization that, although Communist in ideology, was intensely nationalist and virulently opposed to a continuation of French colonization.

Ho Chi Minh and Giap were students of Mao and applied his doctrine of insurgency in their campaign to defeat the French and later the U.S. backed Government of Vietnam (GVN), as the South Vietnamese government was referred to. As described by Andrew Krepinevich, Mao's doctrine encompasses three phases: "first, insurgent agitation and proselytization among the masses – the phase of contention; second, overt violence, guerilla operations and the establishment of bases – the equilibrium phase; and third, open warfare between insurgent and government forces designed to topple the existing regime – the counteroffensive phase."<sup>75</sup> The Viet Minh, as the Communist insurgents were then called, were able to operationalize these concepts to such a great degree that they were able to move to phase three and engage the French in conventional warfare, culminating in the French surrender at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.<sup>76</sup>

The military defeat at Dien Bien Phu brought France to the negotiating table with the Viet Minh in Geneva, Switzerland in 1954. The result was the splitting of Indochina into four separate countries: Cambodia, Laos, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the north under the Communists, and the Republic of Vietnam in the south.<sup>77</sup> The Geneva accords did not envision a perpetually bifurcated Vietnam, however, and made provisions for elections to be held in 1956 with the aim of unifying the country under one political system. The Communist leaders did not want to leave this election to chance. The Hanoi government left behind a network of 10,000 agents to influence the results of elections in the south, while 50,000 to 90,000 more Southerners were brought north for guerilla training and would be infiltrated south in the event that elections were not held.<sup>78</sup> This

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<sup>75</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 17.

<sup>76</sup> George W. Allen, *None so Blind: A Personal Account of the Intelligence Failure in Vietnam*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 56.

<sup>77</sup> Ralph William Johnson, "Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management," (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1985), 16.

<sup>78</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 4.

indeed was the case as President Diem engaged in a campaign of political repression to crush any competition, including Communist elements in South Vietnam.<sup>79</sup> Although relatively effective in suppressing the nascent Communist movement in South Vietnam, Diem's methods closed the political opportunity structures for the South Vietnamese citizenry and were not accompanied by any effective measures to ameliorate an inequitable social system, providing ample grievances for the Communists to capitalize on.<sup>80</sup> Diem's actions convinced Hanoi that political reunification was impossible; prompting them to infiltrate almost 5,000 of the Southerners they had brought north and to create the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam in 1960.<sup>81</sup>

The round of insurgency considered in this paper began in earnest during the Tet holidays of 1960.<sup>82</sup> Reinforced by trained guerillas from the north and spurred by GVN successes against the southern Communist networks, the Communist insurgents, or Viet Cong (VC), embarked on an assassination campaign targeting GVN officials and forces at the village level across the country. This led many of the surviving members of the GVN control apparatus to flee for the safety of the towns and cities, effectively leaving the countryside to VC control.<sup>83</sup> With GVN control mechanisms gone, the VC were allowed to grow rapidly since they were able to move freely among the villages, build their own control mechanisms, institute land reform policies favorable to disaffected peasants, and conduct propaganda to encourage greater levels of recruiting and taxation.

While the situation in South Vietnam was deteriorating, the US was increasing its commitment to enhancing the stability of the country. After the partition mandated by the Geneva accords and subsequent French withdrawal in 1954, the US had increased the size and responsibilities of the MAAG mission of training and advising the Army of the

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<sup>79</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 4.

<sup>80</sup> Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 6.

<sup>81</sup> Ralph William Johnson, "Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management," (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1985), 21.

<sup>82</sup> Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), 113.

<sup>83</sup> Moyer, 5.

Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). Influenced by the events of the recently fought Korean War, MAAG envisioned the primary threat to the GVN as an invasion by the Northern Vietnamese Army (NVA). As a result, MAAG presided over the creation of a conventional force, not realizing the true threat to political instability in South Vietnam was the increasingly capable insurgency.<sup>84</sup> In addition to increasing its role in Vietnamese military affairs, the US also became more involved in the country's political situation as stability decreased. President Kennedy recognized that the increasingly unpopular, repressive, and ineffective rule of President Diem was a major roadblock for progress in the country and encouraged a military coup staged by South Vietnamese generals which was carried out in November, 1963 and resulted in the death of Diem and his brother Ngo.<sup>85</sup>

The short-term effects of the coup were hardly what the US wanted. Political instability continued as a series of generals were unable to consolidate power and move against the VC in a coordinated fashion for four years after the coup. The VC used the time and political space provided by GVN instability to move quickly through the phases envisioned in Mao's insurgency doctrine and felt they were ready to move to the "counteroffensive" phase by 1964. The Hanoi government escalated their open involvement with the VC insurgency and introduced NVA forces in South Vietnam. Realizing that the GVN was in danger of falling, U.S. President Lyndon Johnson increased the participation of US military forces in the conflict, ultimately leading to the introduction of combat forces to directly fight the VC and NVA as well as upgrading MAAG from advisory duties to a combatant command, named the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), led by General William Westmoreland.<sup>86</sup>

The introduction of U.S. combat forces into the conflict successfully combated the conventional threat posed by NVA and "main force" VC units engaged in open warfare. However, these same US forces proved to be ineffective at identifying and

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<sup>84</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 26.

<sup>85</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 5.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 6.

neutralizing the VC infrastructure (VCI) and guerilla units responsible for the continuation of political instability and guerilla warfare throughout the country. The VCI was in fact largely ignored by MACV and ARVN, who preferred to seek out larger formations of enemy forces even after these forces became less prevalent on the battlefield as the VC slipped back into phase two guerilla warfare.<sup>87</sup> The only organizations that were seriously concentrating on the VCI in the “pacification” war before 1966 were a collection of civilian agencies such as the CIA and State Department, as well as half-hearted and under resourced attempts by the GVN police. In addition to suffering a lack of emphasis, pacification efforts were rarely, if ever, coordinated between the agencies and suffered as a result. The conventional warfare approach of MACV and ARVN, combined with the disconnected approach to pacification by the civilian agencies, allowed the VCI to grow and operate relatively unmolested. Realizing this, in 1966 President Johnson sought greater emphasis on pacification and consolidated the formally disparate efforts under one organization, the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Developments Support (CORDS), that had a civilian head but fell under the control of MACV.<sup>88</sup>

The CORDS organization comprised a number of sub organizations involved in the political and economic aspects of counterinsurgency and development; however, it also focused on intelligence collection on, and interdiction of, the VCI. The sub organization charged with this mission, called Intelligence Coordination and Exploitation (ICEX), was the predecessor for the Phoenix program.<sup>89</sup> Although the bureaucracy and procedures for CORDS, and particularly ICEX, were built during 1967, the GVN and military side of MACV still did not pay great attention to the pacification war and persisted in ignoring the threat posed by the VCI and guerillas. This changed in 1968 with the shock of the Tet offensive, where almost every major city in South Vietnam was

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<sup>87</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 141.

<sup>88</sup> Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 48.

<sup>89</sup> Ralph William Johnson, “Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management,” (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1985), 156.

attacked simultaneously by VC, VCI cadres, and NVA forces. Tet convinced the Vietnamese political leadership and the MACV chain of command that the VCI was indeed the greater cause of instability in South Vietnam and must be countered. South Vietnamese President Thieu created Phung Hoang (the GVN counterpart to Phoenix) in July, 1968 and General Creighton Abrams took over command of MACV and insisted on greater military emphasis on pacification efforts.

Although the VCI was hit hard in the aftermath of Tet and increasing attention was finally being paid to the VCI, the clock began ticking for the withdrawal of US forces and an end to US participation in the conflict. Phoenix/Phung Hoang efforts ramped up between 1968 and 1971, causing great damage to the VCI and prompting Hanoi to intervene with another conventional invasion during the spring of 1972. This invasion was stymied by the ARVN with the help of US airpower and advisory assistance. Pacification efforts paused to meet the threat of conventional invasion. Nevertheless by the end of 1972, the VCI virtually ceased to exist in South Vietnam. US advisors and airpower, however, were on their way out of Vietnam and the Phung Hoang program was transferred fully to the GVN National Police, an organization incapable of maintaining the effectiveness of the program without the help of US advisors. Even though the attack on the VCI suffered as a result, the damage already visited on the VCI during the previous years was enough for the North Vietnamese government to abandon the strategy of taking over South Vietnam through insurgency.<sup>90</sup> With the NVA reconstituted after the failed 1972 offensive and the removal of US military support, North Vietnam once again invaded the south in 1975 and succeeded in unifying the country under Communist control.

The remainder of this chapter will be dedicated to examining the role of intelligence and repression selection and their effect on the intensity and durability of the VC insurgency. Starting with the period 1960 through 1968, we will see how GVN/US policy makers' misunderstanding of the conflict contributed to the paucity of population-centric intelligence, a reactive and relatively indiscriminate repression policy, and the

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<sup>90</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 275.



rapid expansion of the VC insurgency that was the result. We will then see how policy maker assessments became more sophisticated, leading to intelligence apparatus changes allowing a selective and increasingly preemptive repression policy and diminishment of the intensity and durability of the insurgency.

## **B. INTELLIGENCE, REPRESSION POLICY, AND THE INSURGENCY: 1960 THROUGH EARLY 1968**

### **1. Intelligence Type and the Available Menu of Repression**

Intelligence operations conducted by the GVN and MAAG/MACV and their support to repression policy choices during this period reflected a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the conflict. As such, the intelligence apparatuses focused on providing tactical military intelligence on the location of NVA and main force VC while largely ignoring the VCI. This problem was compounded by the almost complete disruption of the Cong An (Vietnamese Special Police) in the countryside when the insurgents drove GVN officials into the towns and cities beginning in 1960.<sup>91</sup> The Cong An, though often corrupt and brutal, was the only agency with a good ethnographic understanding of their operating environment and employed police-like investigative intelligence and methods. The loss of this capability and focus on tactical military intelligence resulted in a paucity of information that would allow preemptive and selective repression. Intelligence in this period was focused neither on efforts to understand the ethnographic dimensions of the conflict that would have revealed the underlying and culturally rooted grievances of the rural Vietnamese citizenry and modes of association that the VCI capitalized on nor an incorporation of police-like intelligence methodologies that would have allowed repression of the mobilizing structures. Instead, intelligence was focused on the fielded VC main forces rather than the VCI mobilizing structures themselves. These mobilizing structures consisted of the components of the insurgency that allowed the VC to control the rural population and capitalize on this control through resource, personnel, and information extraction which allowed the VC main forces to grow and operate. Examples of typical VCI roles included Communist

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<sup>91</sup> Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), 116, 188.

village, district, and province leadership who exerted political control; recruiters, tax collectors, propagandists, intelligence collectors; and security and counterintelligence cadres.<sup>92</sup> Since conventional military methods of “finding, fixing, and finishing” the enemy were primarily relied upon to face an already existing insurgency, , the resultant repression policy was indeed reactive, and since tactical military intelligence was a poor method for finding an elusive insurgent enemy, repression tended to be relatively indiscriminate as well.

*a. Policy Makers’ Threat Assessment*

President Diem and his American advisors in MAAG largely viewed conventional invasion by the NVA as the primary threat to stability in South Vietnam. Even the presence of an insurgency in South Vietnam was viewed primarily as an import from North Vietnam rather than a product of the sociopolitical and economic conditions created by the Diem regime. Although the presence of thousands of North Vietnamese infiltrators engaging in attacks against the GVN would certainly have been enough to qualify as an “insurgency,” it was the unattended sociopolitical and economic conditions present in South Vietnam that these Northern cadre capitalized on, allowing the VC to grow beyond a North Vietnamese import and which truly represented the strength of the insurgency. Neither MAAG nor the Diem regime correctly understood that the presence of infiltrated guerillas and their success against the GVN presence in the hamlets and villages depended on the ability of the VCI to provide the VC main forces with supplies, intelligence, and recruits. The VCI also allowed the insurgency to maintain its hold on the villages in the face of government efforts once main forces cleared these areas of GVN officials by filling the power vacuum left by the GVN with their own control mechanisms. The GVN’s misunderstanding of the VCI threat was compounded by Diem’s under-prioritization of the Communists in relation to other perceived threats to

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<sup>92</sup> Ralph William Johnson, “Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management,” (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1985), 55.

GVN rule. Because Diem was more concerned with consolidating his rule in Saigon and guarding against coup attempts, he “paid only passing attention to the Viet Cong in the villages.”<sup>93</sup>

As a result of their understanding of the roots of the conflict, MAAG assisted the GVN in building a military force designed to repel an external invasion at the expense of forces suited to fighting an insurgency. As far back as 1955, and persisting through MAAG’s existence, U.S. advisors resisted GVN efforts to create a force capable of providing internal defense, instead emphasizing the creation of a military that would mirror a conventional US force structure.<sup>94</sup> In addition to preparing the GVN to fight the wrong war, US advisors downplayed the extent of the insurgent threat to their leadership in Washington. Prior to the explosion of guerilla warfare and the VC takeover of the countryside beginning in 1960, MAAG leadership insisted that the VC threat had subsided and any GVN military units involved in counterinsurgency should return to conventional military training.<sup>95</sup> Even after the insurgency heated up in 1960, General Sam Williams, the MAAG chief at the time, resisted using the ARVN for counterinsurgency, instead perceiving that this was a job for the GVN’s internal security forces.<sup>96</sup> Though General Williams may have been correct in theory, in practice the security forces were poorly armed, trained, and led and were no match for the VC. In fact, the security forces provided one of the best sources of arms and ammunition for the VC, who were estimated to have captured 5,000 weapons from the security forces in 1960 and another 6,000 in 1961.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 3.

<sup>94</sup> John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 119.

<sup>95</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 26.

<sup>96</sup> George W. Allen, *None So Blind: A Personal Account of the Intelligence Failure in Vietnam*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 112.

<sup>97</sup> Nagl, 124.

The creation of MACV as the successor to MAAG and the introduction of US combat forces in 1965 did little to focus efforts on countering the VC insurgency. Although US forces stabilized the situation to the extent that they pushed back NVA and VC main forces that had moved into open warfare in 1964, the dominance of the conventional military in influential leadership positions continued to focus the repression policy and intelligence apparatus on reactive and relatively indiscriminate conventional military operations.<sup>98</sup> This policy was embodied in the “search and destroy” strategy adopted in National Security Action Memorandum – 328, which allowed MACV to utilize US troops in direct combat missions whenever General Westmoreland deemed necessary, as opposed to other proposals emphasizing security and force protection.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, pacification was suspiciously viewed as a competing “alternative” strategy by those in the military hierarchy committed to a purely military option and not one that required integration with the military effort.<sup>100</sup> The result of the conventionalization of the counterinsurgency effort was the prioritization of large-scale operations to destroy guerilla forces which “inevitably alerted the VC in advance of their execution” and resulted in little attrition of the enemy, provided scant intelligence for follow-on operations, and did little damage to the VCI.<sup>101</sup> One observer witnessing ARVN/MACV operations during this time noted that these operations were “more appropriate to the European fronts of World War II than...guerilla warfare.”<sup>102</sup>

***b. Impact on the Intelligence Apparatus***

The combination of the disruption of the Cong An and the prioritization of tactical military means for combating a conventional invasion over police-like methods to counter internal subversion resulted in an intelligence apparatus ill-suited for counterinsurgency in Vietnam. For the most part, the organizations involved in

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<sup>98</sup> Ralph William Johnson, “Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management,” (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1985), 113.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>101</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 56.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 65.

intelligence collection and analysis lacked an understanding of the sociopolitical and economic aspects of the VC insurgency, focused on tactical military intelligence on the main force VC units and ignored the VCI, and did not coordinate their efforts appropriately, resulting in a disjointed effort at best.

One of the keys to understanding why the US and GVN were faced with a situation that forced them to act reactively, while opting for a relatively indiscriminate repression policy during the first phase of the VC insurgency has to do with a total lack of emphasis on population-centric intelligence. George Allen notes that even into the mid-1960s, after the US had been involved in Vietnam for over 15 years, “no intelligence staff at any level was doing the basic intelligence research job that ought to have been done on Vietnam.”<sup>103</sup> General Harold Johnson, Army Chief of Staff during this period, ruefully admitted that the U.S. failed to understand the political and sociological factors underlying the VC insurgency.<sup>104</sup> The need for population-centric intelligence was ignored to the point that the MAAG organization charged with advising the ARVN and providing assessments to US leadership in Washington did not even have an intelligence staff and resisted efforts to incorporate intelligence-specific sections in some ARVN units.<sup>105</sup> The ARVN, however, was also complicit in perpetuating the lack of population-centric intelligence. Whereas the VC understood the necessity of integrating with the population and therefore were able to reap the intelligence and resource benefits resulting from this integration, the ARVN were disconnected from the population and suffered from a lack of intelligence as a result.<sup>106</sup>

Instead of a focus on population-centric intelligence, the U.S. and GVN instead pointed their intelligence apparatus at the VC main forces rather than the VCI itself by heavily investing in tactical military intelligence. The ARVN and even the GVN

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<sup>103</sup> George W. Allen, *None So Blind: A Personal Account of the Intelligence Failure in Vietnam*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 101.

<sup>104</sup> John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 141.

<sup>105</sup> Allen, 116, 122.

<sup>106</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 10.

internal security forces were being molded by U.S. advisors to counter a conventional foe and were steered away from developing a “more police intelligence-minded” capacity.<sup>107</sup> When MACV took over from MAAG and persisted with a conventional military strategy to seek out VC main forces, the MAVC intelligence apparatus focused almost exclusively on obtaining information on the VC order of battle while responsibility for the VCI was left to under resourced, disjointed, and often ignored civilian agencies.<sup>108</sup> In fairness to the MACV intelligence apparatus, they had neither the knowledge nor the experience needed to target the VCI and fell into the more comfortable role of order of battle intelligence. However, this situation could have been improved by a more closely integrated effort with civilian agencies, such as the CIA, who were focusing on the VCI. A greater focus on the VCI by all agencies would have increased the availability of population-centric intelligence which would have actually helped the effort to acquire tactical military intelligence and allowed a more selective repression strategy by increasing the effectiveness of targeted military operations.<sup>109</sup>

During this period there were some efforts by military and civilian agencies to acquire population-centric intelligence and pursue more selective and somewhat preemptive repression strategies, but they were in the minority and discouraged by MACV. The U.S. Marine Corps conducted a program called Combined Action Platoons (CAP) where small teams of Marines would set up permanent residence in a hamlet in order to provide security, train the local security force, and set up intelligence nets relying on the locals to provide information on the VC and VCI.<sup>110</sup> This program was largely successful, particularly since the secure environment provided by the CAPs led to a vast increase in population-centric intelligence as villagers provided

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<sup>107</sup> John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 121.

<sup>108</sup> Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 13.

<sup>109</sup> George W. Allen, *None So Blind: A Personal Account of the Intelligence Failure in Vietnam*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 122, 154

<sup>110</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 172-177.

more information on the VC and VCI to US and GVN officials.<sup>111</sup> Army Special Forces took a similar approach with the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG) and produced equally promising results.<sup>112</sup> Meanwhile, the CIA had created highly trained Vietnamese unconventional warfare forces recruited from and employed in their home provinces, called Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRU), and coupled them with intelligence organizations specifically targeting the VCI.<sup>113</sup> The end result of these efforts, however, were that the CAPs were not allowed to expand beyond a very small size, Special Forces were reassigned to duties unrelated to pacification, and the CIA PRU program remained too small to make a significant impact beyond the provinces they were already operating in. In the words of one observer, population-centric efforts during this period are best described as being “everybody’s business and nobody’s.”<sup>114</sup>

*c. Available Repression Type*

As a result of policy maker perception of the threat and the poor focus of the GVN and US intelligence apparatuses, repression selection in this time period most closely approximates type four (reactive and indiscriminate) repression. The focus on conventional military intelligence at the expense of efforts to attack the source of the problem (the VCI) placed emphasis on finding and fixing an elusive enemy and resulted in little actionable intelligence. The intelligence available could only give counterinsurgent forces a rough idea of where the enemy was, necessitating reactive and relatively indiscriminate means such as “search and destroy” and “sweep and clear” operations in order to even find the enemy. Though discriminate in the sense that counterinsurgent forces sought to damage only the VC and NVA, the conventional methods used were more of a hammer than a scalpel and resulted in great devastation against the villagers these operation purportedly sought to help. A great amount of

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<sup>111</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 71.

<sup>112</sup> <sup>112</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 70-74.

<sup>113</sup> Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 41.

<sup>114</sup> Ralph William Johnson, “Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management,” (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1985), 110.

damage caused to the rural population was due to GVN and U.S. use of heavy weapons in and around the hamlets. Artillery, helicopters, airplanes, and heavy ground weapons inevitably wounded or killed bystanders and destroyed their property during engagements in the populated rural areas.<sup>115</sup> In a few cases, mostly involving South Vietnamese or South Korean forces, the Allies used heavy firepower without having evidence of a communist presence in order to avoid conducting reconnaissance or to harass the villagers.<sup>116</sup> Contact with the enemy was less a matter of good intelligence than a matter of luck. The reactive and relatively indiscriminate repression policy of the GVN and U.S. left the VCI relatively unscathed and a permanent fixture in the villages and countryside.

## **2. Repression Policy and Movement Intensity and Durability**

As we asserted earlier in this thesis, type four repression will be relatively less likely to reduce the movement at the meso- and macro-levels to any great degree, while at the same time increasing the political opportunity for movement success, the effectiveness of movement framing, and the pool of sympathetic support and recruitment at the micro-level and periphery. There is clear evidence from this time period in the Vietnam case to support this assertion. GVN and US repression policies allowed political opportunity structures to remain open both by failing to address the insurgent's mobilizing structures (the VCI) as well as the indiscriminate and arbitrary conduct of government and military officials which strengthened the insurgent's strategic frames.

### ***a. The Effect of Ignoring Mobilizing Structures***

Repression aimed at output (guerilla forces) rather than conversion mechanism (meso-level mobilizing structures) allowed VC political opportunity structures to remain open and contributed to the growth of the VC during this time period. Furthermore, conventional methods of finding the enemy were poor and resulted in little attrition of insurgent forces. Even those enemy who were eliminated were

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<sup>115</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 285.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.



quickly replaced by the meso-level structures represented by the VCI who, because relatively unmolested, were able to themselves grow at a rapid pace. The growth of the VCI contributed to the relatively high intensity and durability of the VC insurgency. Ralph Williams notes, conversely, that if GVN and U.S. policy makers “appreciate(d) the nature of the Communist infrastructure and attack(ed) it simultaneously with a ferocity equal to that directed at the [VC] mainforces (*sic*)...the mainforces would have been isolated, contained, and probably destroyed.”<sup>117</sup> Though statistics and estimates related to enemy strength and disposition during the Vietnam War have been heavily contested and in many cases are wildly inaccurate, a look at general trends can prove enlightening when examining the rapid growth of the VC insurgency before 1968. MACV estimates, for instance, reported that in 1963 the VC grew from 16,000 members early in the year to 23,000 by the fall.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, the growth of the VC insurgency was predominantly due to recruiting in South Vietnam; in 1964 only 15% of VC growth was estimated to be a result of North Vietnamese infiltration.<sup>119</sup> By 1965, VC strength was estimated between 50,000 and 60,000 “regulars” and 100,000 “irregular,” or militia forces.<sup>120</sup> The estimates in 1966 were even bleaker for the U.S./GVN with 220,000 VC and 38,000 NVA regulars suspected of operating in South Vietnam.<sup>121</sup>

Detailing the number of insurgent forces only tells one side of the story when gauging the relative intensity and durability of the insurgency; perhaps more important than troop numbers was the increase of VCI control of the countryside. Before 1964, the lowest level of Communist organization was at the district level (a province contained several districts and each district will contained several villages). However, by 1967 the VCI was well organized at the village level throughout much of South

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<sup>117</sup> Ralph William Johnson, “Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management,” (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1985), 98.

<sup>118</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 88.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

Vietnam.<sup>122</sup> In one province alone (Long An), village guerillas (or local VC) grew from 800 in 1962 to 1,150 in 1965.<sup>123</sup> Beyond the numbers, however, the operating principles of the GVN/U.S. forces allowed the VCI to effectively control the villages. Jeffrey Race notes that social control in the counterinsurgency context results from a monopoly of force over the population.<sup>124</sup> Whereas government forces can represent that monopoly for the few hours a month it occupies a hamlet during a sweep operation, even a single guerilla in that same hamlet represents a monopoly for the remainder of that month, and thus is truly in control of that hamlet.<sup>125</sup>

***b. Effect of Government Sociopolitical and Economic Policies***

In addition to misunderstanding the importance of the VCI for the insurgency's intensity and durability, policy makers also did not understand the sociopolitical and economic realities of the conflict and paid little attention to reforms that would lessen the appeal of the VC. Those steps that were taken (such as strategic hamlets) failed due to a misunderstanding of the people and the impact it would have on them. Government policies increased the effectiveness of the VC's strategic frames.

The primary political and economic issue in South Vietnam capitalized on by the VC was the issue of land ownership and distribution. Whereas the Diem regime maintained land policies that for the most part favored the same landlords and richer peasants as earlier French policies, the VC took land in areas it controlled and gave it to formerly landless peasants.<sup>126</sup> The Diem regime downplayed the "existence of strongly felt distributive conflicts in Vietnamese society" to the point that it denied the VC even pursued land redistribution and could not even conceptualize how important this issue was to their own citizenry.<sup>127</sup> Instead of adjusting policies perceived as unjust by the

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<sup>122</sup> Johnson, 40.

<sup>123</sup> Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), 136.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 116, 180.

rural peasantry and preempting VC control efforts, the GVN instead sought control through indiscriminate and reactive policies designed to collectivize villagers in “strategic hamlets” away from their ancestral homes and into areas where they could presumably be controlled and better defended from the insurgency. This strategy, however, aggravated the population, who had already been preempted by VC propaganda, and was a failure.<sup>128</sup> Jeffrey Race contends that:

The forces which the Party [VC] employed to overthrow the system [of GVN control in the villages] were generated by just those measures the government took in the mistaken belief that it was defending itself – restrictions on movement, an annoying system of identification cards, compulsory mass organizations, the national draft, the agrovillage, the strategic hamlets. In this sense is not strictly correct to say that the government was overthrown by the Party – rather the Party, by certain explicit policies of provocation such as the struggle movement, maneuvered the government into overthrowing itself.<sup>129</sup>

Anecdotal recollections provide further evidence for Race’s contention. A senior VC official in one village who “rallied” to the GVN noted that bungled GVN policies accounted for popular sentiment for the VC increasing from a minority, to 50% in 1962, and then a “virtual monopoly” in 1963.<sup>130</sup>

The result of the inept GVN/US repression policies which ignored the VCI and misunderstood the sociopolitical and economic realities on the ground was the rapid growth of the VC and exponential explosion of the insurgency evidenced by the Tet Offensive in January, 1968. The VC insurgency, bolstered by North Vietnamese forces, sent 100,000 troops against Saigon alone and attacked 36 of 43 Provincial capitals, five of six autonomous cities, and 64 of the 242 District capitals throughout South Vietnam.<sup>131</sup> This assault was heavily represented by VC main forces and VCI cadres and

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<sup>128</sup> Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), 190-1.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>130</sup> Stuart A. Herrington, *Silence Was a Weapon: The Vietnam War in the Villages*, (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), 31-32.

<sup>131</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 239.

included all of the South Vietnamese insurgency that was allowed to grow between 1960 and 1968 as a result of the relatively indiscriminate and reactive repression strategy pursued by the GVN and U.S.<sup>132</sup>

### **3. The Effects of Repression Policy on Subsequent Intelligence and Operational Policy Changes**

The introduction of U.S. combat forces in 1965 and their subsequent inability to rapidly defeat the VC insurgency using conventional methods frustrated U.S. policy makers in Washington and Vietnam who were becoming increasingly aware of the ineffective operational policies contributing to an inefficient intelligence apparatus.<sup>133</sup> Steps to address this issue were initiated by President Johnson in 1966 after a series of high level conferences with GVN, U.S., and other allied leaders in Honolulu and Manila, resulting in a number of institutional changes such as the creation of CORDS in 1967.<sup>134</sup> It took the shock of Tet, however, to get the GVN fully on board with these institutional changes, yet once GVN/U.S. efforts were relatively consolidated, an intelligence and operations capacity was created that sought and used population-centric intelligence to focus attacks on the VCI, supporting a more selective and increasingly preemptive repression strategy. This section will discuss the birth and composition of CORDS, the Phoenix/Phung Hoang program, and the intelligence it provided that impacted subsequent repression policies.

#### ***a. CORDS***

CORDS was created in May of 1967 to consolidate pacification efforts and raise their status vis-à-vis MACV's conventional military approach. Ambassador Robert Komer was its civilian head who served as a deputy of General Westmoreland under MACV, giving CORDS access to military manpower and resources unlike

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<sup>132</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 243.

<sup>133</sup> Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 47.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

previous pacification programs.<sup>135</sup> Pacification efforts in Vietnam, as defined by CORDS, included efforts to provide local security, destroy the VCI, enhance local governance, strengthen the ties between local and central government, and increase economic and social development.<sup>136</sup> In order to accomplish these goals, CORDS consisted of a number of subordinate agencies.<sup>137</sup> The Chieu Hoi program sought to induce VC defections and gain intelligence from defectors while reintegrating them into South Vietnamese society. The New Life development program sought to address the aforementioned land issues by redistributing land as well as opening markets between villages, providing government subsidized rice seed, and improving farm incomes. The vulnerability of persons displaced by fighting to VC proselytizing was *addressed* by the Refugee Program which provided subsistence and relocation for the displaced. Finally, a Psychological Operations program was instituted to inform the South Vietnamese of these new programs as well as to persuade them to resist VC subversion.

Overall, these measures opened the political opportunity structures of the villagers and, in the terms of Social Movement Theory used in this thesis, diminished the effectiveness of VC strategic framing by attempting to ameliorate the sociopolitical and economic grievances the VC had been capitalizing on, yet they also provided for an attack on the VC's mobilizing structures through selective repression. In order to accomplish this goal, CORDS regained control of all territorial paramilitary forces (RF/PF) from MACV military channels and returned them to a more geographically defined role of protecting specific provinces, districts, and villages.<sup>138</sup> In addition, CORDS instituted the Public Safety Program which included the National Police (NP), National Police Field Forces (NPFF), and the Special Branch, the investigative arm of the NP whose role was to apply police intelligence to tracking down the VCI.<sup>139</sup> Most important for understanding how the creation of CORDS affected changes in the

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<sup>135</sup> Moyer, 49.

<sup>136</sup> Ralph William Johnson, "Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management," (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1985), 137.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

intelligence learning curve, however, CORDS created ICEX, the coordinating body specifically created to destroying the VCI, and the predecessor to Phoenix and Phung Hoang.

***b. ICEX, Phoenix, and Phung Hoang***

Created in 1967 under CORDS, ICEX was an attempt to coordinate and integrate existing intelligence and operational assets targeting the VCI under one organization.<sup>140</sup> The goal of ICEX was to focus the intelligence apparatus' effort on the VCI, and would then provide this information to dedicated operational forces responsible for interdicting key members of the VCI. In essence, ICEX would "permit a 'rifle shot' rather than a shotgun approach to the real target [the VCI]...employing essentially police type and other special resources and techniques."<sup>141</sup> Initially, ICEX was predominantly a US effort and entailed efforts to institutionalize the bureaucracy at the national, province, and district levels.<sup>142</sup> The national level bureaucracy consisted of the CORDS head, the CIA assistant to the Ambassador, and the MACV J2 and J3, and was responsible for the highest levels of coordination and decision making. Operational decisions were decentralized to the provincial and district levels. U.S. ICEX advisors assisted Vietnamese Province Chiefs in establishing Provincial Intelligence and Operations Coordinating Centers (PIOCC). The PIOCCs were responsible for coordinating VCI intelligence collection programs, assuring timely correlation and dissemination of collected information, recommending operations, and generally attempting to stimulate Vietnamese interest in focusing on the VCI in their respective provinces.<sup>143</sup> ICEX was also tasked with creating District Intelligence and Operations Coordinating Centers (DIOCC), which were the real action arm of ICEX and later Phoenix/Phung Hoang, responsible for concentrating on "the rapid evaluation and dissemination of infrastructure intelligence plus quick reaction operations targeted at harassing, capturing, and

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<sup>140</sup> Ralph William Johnson, "Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management," (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1985), 170-1.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 191-192.

eliminating the local VCI.”<sup>144</sup> The PIOCCs and DIOCCs were linked to PRUs, Police Field Forces, and other regional security forces subordinate to their respective province chiefs and were the action arms utilizing the targeting intelligence provided by the PIOCCs and DIOCCs. PIOCC and DIOCC intelligence was also provided to U.S./ARVN units who could act upon it if they felt appropriate.

Any results generated by ICEX through early 1968 consisted of creating the organizations and procedures and were accomplished due to US advisor efforts rather than through the participation of the Vietnamese. Most Province Chiefs responsible for implementing and carrying out the attack on the VCI envisioned by CORDS were waiting for instructions from central GVN government that this effort was a priority.<sup>145</sup> These instructions were finally forthcoming in December, 1967 with a decree legalizing Vietnamese participation in ICEX (renamed Phoenix), and creating a Vietnamese counterpart named Phung Hoang.<sup>146</sup> However, it was not until Tet that GVN energetically supported the effort to go after the VCI. Realizing that the presence of the VCI accounted for the intensity and durability of the VC insurgency starkly displayed by the Tet offensive and understanding that a radical shift to population-centric intelligence was the only way to address this threat, President Thieu mandated GVN participation in the attack against the VCI on July 1, 1968.<sup>147</sup> In addition to this paradigm shift in the GVN’s understanding of the threat, MACV commander General Westmoreland was replaced by General Creighton Abrams, who ordered many U.S. military commanders to invest more efforts in population-centric operations as opposed to tactical military operations focusing on VC main forces.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Ralph William Johnson, “Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management,” (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1985), 192.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 201. Phung Hoang roughly translates to “phoenix” in Vietnamese.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>148</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 200.

Mandated GVN participation in Phoenix/Phung Hoang more fully integrated the GVN intelligence and security apparatus into the already existing ICEX bureaucracy. At the national level, the GVN Minister of Interior was placed at the head of the combined Phoenix/Phung Hoang effort, which also included the Director General of the GVN National Police.<sup>149</sup> GVN leadership at the Province and District levels were now responsible for the activities of the PIOCCs and DIOCCs in their respective areas and continued to collect, collate, and analyze information on local VCI and direct local forces in the attack against the VCI that ICEX envisioned.<sup>150</sup> This was perhaps the greatest accomplishment of Phung Hoang since decentralization to, and emphasis on, the lowest levels finally challenged the VC insurgency where they had been most effective.<sup>151</sup>

*c. Intelligence Operations in Phung Hoang*

Intelligence operations under Phung Hoang predominantly focused on HUMINT derived from the Vietnamese population and rallied or captured VC and VCI. The intelligence methodology used to transform HUMINT derived intelligence into operational targets very much resembled a police investigation approach as information was used to build a “case” in the form of targeting dossiers against individual VCI. In addition to police-like methods, reliance on locals and rallied or captured VC and VCI provided a wealth of ethnographic intelligence by utilizing villagers and former insurgents as their primary source of information. Finally, this intelligence was fed directly to dedicated local forces charged with interdicting the VCI.

With the advent of Phung Hoang, the Chieu Hoi began to be used to greater effect. Information derived from rallier debriefings was channeled into the Phung Hoang intelligence apparatus and was often the single largest source of Phung Hoang

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<sup>149</sup> Ralph William Johnson, “Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management,” (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1985), 220.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 237.



intelligence.<sup>152</sup> The timeliness, accuracy, and volume of information derived from the Chieu Hoi program were excellent since the information was providing willingly by individuals intimately familiar with VC operations and personalities at the local level as opposed to lengthy interrogation processes.<sup>153</sup> Ralliers often became active in the PRUs and conducted missions against their former comrades, greatly increasing the effectiveness of the operations based on their knowledge of enemy personnel and locations.<sup>154</sup> Phung Hoang also relied on information from informants (typically villagers who voluntarily provided information during walk-in visits and other contacts with GVN officials) and agents (individuals with access to the VC who were formally tasked by the intelligence apparatus to collect specific information). Casual informants and agents living in the villages who were relatives of GVN employees were the greatest sources of HUMINT in this category, especially after the GVN provided greater control over erstwhile VC areas and the number of GVN officials stationed in their home provinces increased.<sup>155</sup> HUMINT derived from interrogations continued to suffer from a bureaucratic arrangement that spirited detainees to higher headquarters for questioning after the capturing unit had a small window of time for tactical interrogation.<sup>156</sup> Once at higher headquarters, any information that finally did trickle down to field units was often no longer timely enough to be used operationally. However, if detainees could be kept within the Phung Hoang system, Vietnamese interrogators who were now integrated into the program were able to derive increasingly better intelligence during interrogations due to their greater cultural knowledge than most US interrogators.<sup>157</sup> Finally, though not strictly HUMINT, intelligence from document and material exploitation (DOCEX) of VC materials found during operations increased as more attention and manpower was

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<sup>152</sup> Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 132.

<sup>153</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 108.

<sup>154</sup> Stuart A. Herrington, *Silence Was a Weapon: The Vietnam War in the Villages*, (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), 116.

<sup>155</sup> Moyer, 71-72.

<sup>156</sup> Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 66.

<sup>157</sup> Moyer, 74.

provided to processing and exploiting these sources and integrating them into the target dossiers. DOCEX proved to be very useful for revealing the VCI networks as it often provided the names and positions of members of the insurgent's shadow government.<sup>158</sup>

The end product of these intelligence operations was the VCI dossiers used by the operational arm of Phung Hoang to target individuals for "rifle-shot" operations intended to neutralize and prosecute VCI cadres. Considered the "key to success" of Phung Hoang, all of the information related to an individual VCI cadre derived from the police-like investigative process was consolidated in one set of documents.<sup>159</sup> Each dossier included all reports on an individual's activities, any related interrogation reports, Hoi Chan (the term for Chieu Hoi ralliers) debriefings related to the individual, any exploited documents related to the individual, and essential elements of information (EEIs) detailing further collection requirements needed to fill intelligence gaps on the individual.<sup>160</sup>

Another innovation of the Phung Hoang program, and at the crux of the PIOCC and DIOCC, was the alignment of the operational arm of the GVN security forces with the intelligence apparatus. Forces directly receiving VCI dossiers for prosecution included the NPFF, the Special Police (SP), the RF/PF, and the PRUs. Though this innovation enhanced the fight against the VCI, one of the major deficiencies in the GVN security apparatus was the disparity in quality between forces. The NPFF, who were envisioned to play the key operational role in Phung Hoang, were poorly manned, trained, and led, resulting in relatively inefficient operations to neutralize VCI.<sup>161</sup> The SP, on the other hand, predominantly operating in the cities and towns, were far more capable and neutralized a larger percentage of higher ranking VCI than other organizations.<sup>162</sup> The RF/PF became the largest paramilitary arm of CORDS in the

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<sup>158</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 112.

<sup>159</sup> Ralph William Johnson, "Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management," (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1985), 339.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 339.

<sup>161</sup> Moyer, 163.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 164.

districts and villages. Although originally designed to provide local security, prior to 1965 they were under control of the ARVN and were misdirected against main force VC. With the advent of CORDS, however, the RF/PF were redirected and obtained good results against the VCI once they had access to Phung Hoang intelligence.<sup>163</sup> Finally, the PRUs proved to be the most effective unit at integrating Phung Hoang intelligence with counter-VCI operations. The PRUs were manned by virulent anti-communists from the same hamlet provinces they served in, many of whom were former Communists who had rallied.<sup>164</sup> The PRUs were created by the CIA, who also trained, equipped, and directly advised them. Because of this close relationship, PRUs often received intelligence from the CIA not available to other operational arms of Phung Hoang, and created their own networks consisting of relatives from every village in the province they operated in.<sup>165</sup> PRU operations typically enjoyed great success because, unlike other Phung Hoang operational units, they regularly operated in small teams at night in VC controlled areas. However, concerns with maintaining the leadership and personnel quality and security kept their numbers small.<sup>166</sup>

### **C. INTELLIGENCE, REPRESSION POLICY, AND THE INSURGENCY: LATE 1968 THROUGH 1972**

#### **1. Intelligence Type and the Available Menu of Repression**

To the extent that it was stressed by GVN officials in Saigon and at the provincial and district levels, Phung Hoang provided the type of intelligence needed to support a selective repression strategy. Though at this point in the insurgency physically interdicting the VCI can still be considered reactive, when combined with the other CORDS programs addressing the sociopolitical and economic roots of the conflict we see an attempt by the GVN and US to be increasingly preemptive as well, since political and economic programs were developed that sought to open political opportunity structures

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<sup>163</sup> Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 137.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>165</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 165.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

and regain the initiative lost to VC propaganda and policies. Military operations using cordon and search and sweep and clear tactics still occurred during this period; however, there was an increase in the number of selective operations under the Phung Hoang program.<sup>167</sup> A breakdown between the numbers of tactical military operations versus Phung Hoang counter-VCI operations are not provided here; however, circumstantial and some specific evidence point to greater emphasis on selectivity in GVN and U.S. policy. The decrease in the use of heavy weapons in and around populated areas, the increase in the availability of population centric-intelligence, and a number of specific operations whose details have been revealed all point to an expanded repression menu allowed by Phung Hoang population-centric intelligence.

The period 1968-1972, particularly as the Phung Hoang program matured in the year-and-a-half before the US withdrawal of advisors, saw an increased reliance on operations targeting specific VCI as opposed to sweep and clear operations that might only happen to catch VCI in their nets.<sup>168</sup> More precise intelligence allowed GVN pacification forces to apply repression more selectively than MACV or ARVN units and more discriminately than even Diem's police in the 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>169</sup> The effect of selective repression can be seen in the operating procedures of the VC and VCI. Attacks on the VC and VCI weakened them to the point that they had to operate in smaller, harder to find units. This in essence necessitated more selective operations, thus obviating the efficacy of massed fires in the vicinity of hamlets and gave greater control of operations to the territorial forces employed by Phung Hoang. Conventional military operations featuring the use of heavy weapons to target the VC declined in the vicinity of populated areas. Air strikes within one kilometer of populated hamlets decreased from 15.2 percent of total airstrikes in 1969 to 4.1 percent in 1971.<sup>170</sup> Surveys indicated that

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<sup>167</sup> Notwithstanding General Creighton's orders to focus on a more population-centric strategy, evidence indicates that indiscriminate nature of these operations actually increased in some areas. See Krepinevich, 257.

<sup>168</sup> Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 234.

<sup>169</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 292.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

the number of villagers who reported no air or artillery strikes landing either within or in the vicinity of their hamlets for a given month increased from 69.8 percent in December, 1969 to 89 percent in December, 1971.<sup>171</sup>

In addition to evidence of an expanded repression menu indicated by decreasing reliance on relatively indiscriminate artillery and air strikes, an increase in the availability of population-centric intelligence, particularly law enforcement intelligence resulted from an increased focus on a population-centric strategy. A repression policy featuring greater selectivity resulted from the expansion of GVN control and security into the villages as well as the institutional changes brought about by Phung Hoang, particularly the creation of the PIOCCs and DIOCCs.<sup>172</sup> As GVN control expanded, fewer areas came under VC control and the villagers in these areas felt secure enough to provide information to the GVN regarding the identity of local VCI. Coupled with the quick reaction capability created by the mating of intelligence and operational forces at the local level, more selective repression of the VCI was possible. Greater emphasis on the capture and prosecution of VCI, combined with the institution of the dossier system, also created greater incentive for selectivity and, unlike during the previous repression policy, resulted in operations that usually only targeted people when security forces had strong evidence that those targeted were full-fledged Communists.<sup>173</sup> Again, although statistics derived from the Vietnam War can be problematic, the general trend of VCI neutralizations is revealing and indicates the impact of population-centric intelligence on repression selection. In 1968, the first year of the Phung Hoang program, 15,776 VCI were reported neutralized. This number increased to 19,534 in 1969; 22,341 in 1970; and, presumably due to the decline in VCI strength and diminished abilities to recruit, dipped to 17,690 in 1971.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 295.

<sup>172</sup> Ralph William Johnson, "Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management," (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1985), 285.

<sup>173</sup> Moyer, 123.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 236.

There are also a limited number of specific examples of Phung Hoang operations indicating an expanded repression menu. These examples are limited by the continued classification of much of the information as well as the fact that Phung Hoang was not applied evenly throughout the country and was only leveraged to the extent that it was stressed by local leaders and staffed with capable personnel. Indeed, uneven application was Phung Hoang's greatest weakness. However, when the program enjoyed leadership support and emphasis, a high degree of selectivity and effectiveness was possible.<sup>175</sup> For instance, in Ben Cat District during August 1969, 14 VCI were targeted and neutralized on the basis of intelligence derived by a Chieu Hoi rallier and subsequent interrogations of captured VCI.<sup>176</sup> The DIOCC for this particular district received information from the rallier of a tunnel where the district's assistant VCI party chief was hiding. The DIOCC quickly relayed this intelligence to its associated PRU, resulting in the capture and interrogation the VCI who revealed the location of another tunnel nearby. Another VCI and a number of documents were captured in this tunnel. The VCI and documents were transferred to the PIOCC and provided specific targeting information for another round of operations that netted the remainder of the VCI in the district as well as five "legal" VCI who likely would never have been identified and captured without the PIOCC/DIOCC efforts and emphasis on selective repression.<sup>177</sup> There are also examples of instances where conventional military units conducted selective operations in conjunction with Phung Hoang. The 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division collaborated with the Cu Chi DIOCC in September, 1969 to target the VCI in Hau Hoa Hamlet.<sup>178</sup> Based on intelligence provided by the DIOCC, a targeted raid was conducted to capture the hamlet's finance cadre. This individual was captured and interrogated, and revealed the identities and locations of five other VCI and a VC assassination cell member.

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<sup>175</sup> Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 131.

<sup>176</sup> Ralph William Johnson, "Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management," (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1985), 297-8.

<sup>177</sup> A legal cadre is a VCI with legal GVN identification and documentation who works surreptitiously as a member of the underground and resides openly in the populated areas. Conversely, an illegal cadre does not have GVN documentation and must hide in the rural areas or live illegally in the populated areas. Since they did not hide their affiliation with the VC, however, they were the public face of the insurgency.

<sup>178</sup> Johnson, 299, 301.

## 2. Repression Policy and Movement Intensity and Durability

The selective, though still largely reactive repression strategy pursued by the GVN and US and enabled by the population-centric intelligence activities of Phung Hoang greatly decreased the intensity and durability of the VCI insurgency to the point that North Vietnam abandoned a strategy of overthrowing the GVN from within South Vietnam and opted for conventional invasion instead. The VCI was decimated by the combination of the failed Tet offensive in 1968 and the increasing effectiveness of Phung Hoang between 1968 and 1972. Although Phung Hoang operations netted a smaller number of high-level VC cadre than mid-and low-level operatives, these operations succeeded in severing the meso-level link between the VCI and the population. Finally, the disruption of the VCI and expansion of GVN control allowed by Phung Hoang selectivity contributed to a shifting of villager attitudes away from the VC insurgency.

The impact of the failed Tet offensive on the VCI cannot be overlooked. MACV and ARVN conventional forces killed an estimated 37,000 enemy and captured 6,000 more, including the attrition of some 30 percent of the VCI.<sup>179</sup> In addition to those killed in the fighting, many “legal” VCI cadres publically revealed themselves during Tet to exhort the population to rise against the GVN and were subsequently turned in to GVN security forces for arrest.<sup>180</sup> Although Tet played an important role in the degradation of the VCI, it was the selectivity of Phung Hoang that capitalized on this initial defeat and finished off the VCI. No lesser authorities on the subject than the Communists themselves credited Phung Hoang with the attrition of the VCI. One senior Communist official wrote after the war that “[Phung Hoang] was dangerously effective” and accounted for the virtual elimination of the infrastructure in one important province.<sup>181</sup> Another admitted that Phung Hoang cost “the loss of thousands of our cadres,” while others noted that Phung Hoang killed more VCI than even the 21,000 the US accounted

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<sup>179</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 239.

<sup>180</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 65.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

for.<sup>182</sup> VC documents captured during the war noted the role GVN pacification efforts and Phung Hoang played in the failure of the VC to expand the role of guerilla warfare in the conflict.<sup>183</sup> MACV estimates, though they should be considered cautiously, indicated that the VCI was degraded by 18 percent between 1967 and 1970, a significant figure revealing that the VCI was unable to replace cadres as quickly as they were being neutralized.<sup>184</sup> Furthermore, the overall level of importance of neutralized VCI was increasing as well. In 1970, 31 percent of the VCI neutralized were “A” category, meaning that they were full Communist Party members, a significant increase over the 10.7 percent “A” category VCI neutralized in 1968.<sup>185</sup>

Perhaps the most important effect Phung Hoang had on the diminishing intensity and durability of the VC insurgency was the part it played in degrading the link between the insurgents and the population. As mentioned above, the greatest number of VCI neutralizations accounted for by Phung Hoang were VCI cadres at the village level or below.<sup>186</sup> Although some observers note this as a failure of Phung Hoang to live up to its billing, neutralizing the meso-level cadres had the effect of removing the institutional layer responsible for executing the policies allowing the insurgency to make use of and control the population.<sup>187</sup> Mark Moyer notes that cadre above the village level became “like colonels and generals deprived of enlisted personnel and junior officers.”<sup>188</sup> Apart from neutralizations, Phung Hoang pushed illegal cadres out of the villages and into hiding, causing them to lose contact with the villagers and to discontinue taxation and recruitment in many instances.<sup>189</sup> The Communists attempted several abortive measures to compensate for this disconnect. In some instances they tried to increase the ratio of

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<sup>182</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 245-6.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, 244.

<sup>184</sup> Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 134-135.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.



legal cadres to illegal cadres in order to allow them to stay in the populated areas, yet failed to recruit enough legal VCI to make this effort work.<sup>190</sup> The VC also attempted to place the responsibilities of captured VCI onto an increasingly smaller and less experienced pool of VCI who remained at large, with little success.<sup>191</sup> Finally, the Communists were forced to infiltrate a greater number of North Vietnamese to fill in the gaps in the VCI. This effort also failed due to the unfamiliarity of the Northerners with the area as well as the dislike most Southerners had for the North Vietnamese.<sup>192</sup>

With the emphasis on pacification and decimation of the VC post-Tet, security increased around the country as the GVN extended its control into previously contested and VCI-held districts and villages. Even by Communist assessments, pacification efforts were going the GVN's way. North Vietnamese General Giap estimated that from the total number of approximately 10,600 hamlets in South Vietnam, by 1970 the GVN had increased its control from 5,920 to 7,920 hamlets.<sup>193</sup> This shift in control had a tremendous effect on villager attitudes. Since the villagers perceived the VC as weakening vis-à-vis the GVN, they began to provide less support in the form of recruitment, taxation, and intelligence to the VCI. One high-ranking VC political officer noted that these problems were so acute that the Southern Revolution "was history" by 1972.<sup>194</sup> Another VCI cadre in charge of the finances and economics section in his area noted that the unwillingness of the villagers to support the VC diminished his ability to collect taxes from \$1,700,000 in 1968 to only \$300,000 in 1969.<sup>195</sup> Furthermore, without villager support the VCI were unable to move freely in the populated areas, greatly diminishing their ability to gain intelligence on the GVN, provide warning of impending operations against the VC, or act as guides for VC/NVA units to attack GVN forces.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Dale Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes: The Phoenix Program and the Vietnam War*, (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 61.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 252.

<sup>192</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 268.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 265-6.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 272.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 273-274.

Finally, the more selective repression strategy of the GVN allowed by the Phung Hoang program did not go unnoticed by the villagers. They saw that the GVN/U.S. use of violence during the Phung Hoang period was aimed primarily at the VC and VCI in the villages and hamlets, and not the South Vietnamese civilians.<sup>197</sup> The villagers recognized that through better intelligence, fewer innocent villagers were being targeted by GVN and U.S. forces while a greater number of VC were being neutralized, leading to increasing hesitation of the villagers to support the VC insurgency.<sup>198</sup>

Despite the relative success of the Phung Hoang program, the U.S. and GVN failed to deny the Communists control of South Vietnam. However, this was not ultimately the fault of counterinsurgency efforts characterized by CORDS and Phung Hoang. Rather, the loss of South Vietnam was a result of U.S. policy makers failing to provide conventional military support to the ARVN when it became apparent that the North Vietnamese had abandoned insurgency for another military invasion in 1975. Unlike the overt NVA invasions in 1968 and 1972, in 1975 there were no U.S. troops, artillery, or aircraft to help the ARVN turn back the NVA. As Stuart Herrington notes, however, it is telling that there was also no VC Provisional Revolutionary Government to take over in Vietnam after the invasion, which very much had to do with the success of U.S./GVN efforts to destroy the VCI.<sup>199</sup>

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

In the end, North Vietnam was able to defeat the GVN and reunify the country under Communist control in 1975, though the VC played little part in the *coup de grace*. GVN and U.S. policy makers had succeeded in identifying the VCI threat, crafted a population-centric strategy featuring a selective and increasingly preemptive repression policy, and created an intelligence apparatus designed to collect law enforcement-type intelligence and coupled with an operational arm to utilize it. Pacification efforts

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<sup>197</sup> Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 300.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 301.

<sup>199</sup> Stuart A. Herrington, *Silence Was a Weapon: The Vietnam War in the Villages*, (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), 219.

including Phung Hoang were often beset by corruption, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness caused by poor leadership, poor or little manpower, and few resources. Yet we also observe that the culmination of these efforts resulted in better population-centric intelligence and supported a selective and increasingly preemptive repression policy that ultimately contributed to the undoing of the VC insurgency. Although tactical military intelligence remained important in fighting main force VC and the NVA, as law enforcement-like intelligence and operations were conducted against the VCI the ability of the VC main forces and NVA to operate diminished, leading to fewer operations necessary against these threats. We also see that effective targeting of the VCI necessitated decentralization of intelligence and operations down to the local level at the provinces and districts, as well as the tight integration of intelligence and security apparatuses at these same levels. The provision of security, extension of government control down to the local levels, and collection of population-centric intelligence and conduct of selective repression were self-reinforcing cycles. With security and government control came better intelligence. With better intelligence came more selective repression, and more selective repression disrupted the insurgent's control mechanisms, loosening their ability to influence the population. This encouraged the population to support the perceived winner and led to more intelligence, allowing a greater number of selective operations. The case of Vietnam ultimately warns us that insurgencies must be repressed preemptively this was not the case in Vietnam and selectively guided by an understanding of the situation provided by robust ethnographic intelligence and targeted by law enforcement-like intelligence and operations. Yet, failing this, we see that choosing a repression strategy dominated by selectivity can rapidly increase the intelligence learning curve and diminish the intensity and durability of the insurgent movement.

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## **V. CASE STUDY: NORTHERN IRELAND**

This chapter is dedicated to examining the role of population-centric intelligence and repression selection and their effect on the intensity and durability of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) insurgent movement in Northern Ireland from 1968 through 1988. After offering a brief narrative of the modern Irish Republican movement through 1988, we will examine the period beginning in 1968 with the Catholic Civil Rights movement in protest to the policies of Ulster Loyalists, continuing through the formation and rise of the PIRA and Sinn Fein, the introduction of British Army and intelligence elements into Northern Ireland and the subsequent “Dirty War”, and will conclude with the “shoot-to-kill” controversy of the 1980’s. Our closing bookend in this case will be the 1988 killing of three PIRA terrorists by the British Special Air Service (SAS) in Gibraltar. As with our treatment of the case in Vietnam, this timeframe has been chosen because it captures the greatest variation in the relationships between intelligence, repression policies, and resultant intensity and durability of the insurgent movement relevant to our theoretical framework. The overall timeframe of 1968 through 1988 is further delineated into three time periods that demonstrate the variation in intelligence and repression policy, as well the subsequent effects of these policies on the intensity and durability of the PIRA.

The first of these begins in 1968 with the Catholic Civil Rights movement in Northern Ireland and concludes with the introduction of the first British SAS forces into the South Armagh region of Northern Ireland in 1976. This time period includes the entry of British regular Army forces into Northern Ireland, the split of the PIRA from the Official IRA, the policy of internment without trial, and the establishment and eventual repeal of Special Category Status for political prisoners. The second time period continues from 1976 and encompasses the introduction of the policy of Police Primacy and the ascendance of the covert “Dirty War”, ending with the emergence of the “shoot-to-kill” controversy in 1982. The final period coincides with the height of the “shoot-to-kill” controversy and the conduct and aftermath of the Supergrass trials, ending with the March 1988 killing of three IRA terrorists in Gibraltar. In each time period, we will

provide evidence of initial intelligence policy, subsequent repression policy, and the resultant intensity and durability of the insurgency. During the first two time periods we will also discuss evidence of the intelligence learning curve and its implications for subsequent policy and operations during the next and future time periods.

## **A. BACKGROUND**

The start of what is popularly known in Britain as “the Troubles” is, as with any such long standing conflict, difficult to pinpoint. Coogan writes, “To the physical force school of Irish nationalism the Norman coming is generally regarded as the starting point for ‘eight hundred years of British oppression.’”<sup>200</sup> While the arrival of the Normans in the late 1160s might very well serve as a useful signpost when considering the fundamental root of this conflict, perhaps more informative is that the nature of conflict during the Anglo-Norman conquest reflects the beginnings of an Irish proclivity for guerilla warfare. As a function of their military inferiority to the encroaching Norman armies, the Irish enjoyed success only when employing unconventional warfare techniques and an affinity for the guerilla and his tactics began to be entrenched within the Irish nationalist zeitgeist.<sup>201</sup> This appeal eventually proves invaluable for nationalist movements wishing to secure popular support for their cause.

Nevertheless, our contemporary understanding of the modern conflict is more readily traced to the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin and the subsequent May 1921 establishment of the sovereign Irish Republic in the south and west, with the six counties of Northern Ireland remaining a British province. It is during this most recent era of Anglo-Irish conflict that the island witnessed the emergence of the IRA from the previously established Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and as the armed volunteer force of the revolt. The influence and strength of the IRA, however, was not a foregone conclusion, and while they were “the central force in Ireland in 1921, [and] a significant

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<sup>200</sup> Tim Pat Coogan, *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Search for Peace*, (Boulder, CO: Robert Rinehart Publishers, 1996), 1.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 4-5.

factor in the ‘thirties,’”<sup>202</sup> they had become “of much less importance in the ‘fifties.’”<sup>203</sup> Indeed, the intervening years had not been kind to the IRA, and unarmed and toothless by the 1968 Civil Rights movement, the now Marxist organization “envisaged the proletariat replacing British rule with a workers’ state.”<sup>204</sup>

In response to the August 1969 Battle of Bogside, and the subsequent reintroduction of the British Army back into Northern Ireland, the IRA would undergo a fundamental split; the traditionalist Provisionals abandoning the “Marxist, utopian ideology of the Officials”<sup>205</sup> and returning to the more “simple but potent egalitarian tradition of Irish nationalism which burned in the Catholic estates.”<sup>206</sup> The popular support for such a bold move was not difficult to come by. The period of unrest lasting throughout the summer of 1969 and which culminated in the Battle of Bogside saw an utter failure on the part of the Official IRA to protect Catholic communities in Northern Ireland from the sectarian violence of Protestant Unionists. Their stock in decline, the Officials held little sway within the republican enclaves, while the PIRA began an ultimately successful campaign for the support needed to transform the dominant doctrine within the IRA.

In August 1971, with the recognition of the success of the more militant PIRA in rearming and renewing the fight against the British in Northern Ireland, Stormont reinstituted a policy of internment without trial; a policy not seen in Northern Ireland since the 1950s. This policy was wildly unpopular among the republican communities of Northern Ireland; more so because of the tremendous number of innocents caught up in

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<sup>202</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *The Secret Army: The IRA*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2008), xv.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 26.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

the practice of indiscriminate arrests following immediately on the heels of policy. By some accounts as many as 2,400 Catholics were interned within the first months of this policy, most of whom were eventually released for lack of cause.<sup>207</sup>

With more than 500 killed, 1972 marked the bloodiest year of the Troubles.<sup>208</sup> The year began in an inauspicious manner with the Bloody Sunday massacre on January 30<sup>th</sup> wherein soldiers of the British Army Parachute Regiment fired on an illegal republican protest in Londonderry, killing 14 and wounding nearly as many. Bloody Sunday became a seminal event to the nationalist movement in Ireland, both north and south, and “the effect at the time was a dramatic increase in nationalist alienation.”<sup>209</sup> This was reprised on July 21 in the Bloody Friday incident, when 22 PIRA bombs detonated in Belfast, killing nine and injuring many more.

In June, William Whitelaw, then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, instituted Special Category Status for paramilitary prisoners. This measure was taken to diffuse a republican hunger strike and had the effect of bestowing upon republican prisoners rights and privileges more in keeping with prisoner-of-war status than with that afforded criminal prisoners.<sup>210</sup> This policy would prove disastrous in later years as it provided legitimacy to the claims of the PIRA to lawful combatant status – directly contradicting the British policy of treating terrorism as a criminal act. Despite the logic motivating the decision to grant Special Category Status to paramilitary prisoners, the more egregious policy of internment without trial continued; enduring until 1975.

In 1976, policy makers embraced and formally instituted a policy of Police Primacy in Northern Ireland. Ushered in by Kenneth Newman, the Chief Constable of the RUC at the time, Police Primacy saw the RUC assuming overall responsibility for security in Northern Ireland to include intelligence operations. While codified in policy, in practice the RUC were not yet ready to assume this role and relied heavily upon the

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<sup>207</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 68.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 137.



Army to bridge the gap while it constituted the necessary intelligence and security apparatus.<sup>211</sup> Indeed, it was this same year that brought the first SAS forces to Northern Ireland, with a troop of 12 SAS men being deployed to south Armagh on January.

In addition, 1976 bore the fruits of the ill-advised policy of Special Category Status. Repealed in March by Merlyn Rees, the end of status gave rise to a series of protests within the Maze prison. Lasting years, these protests culminated with the Dirty Protests and hunger strikes of 1978-1981. While meeting with little to no tactical success in the battle over prisoner status, by virtue of the international attention and sympathy that they attracted, these last two protests were enormously successful for the republican movement's strategic framing and mobilization. Indeed, the election of Bobby Sands, the H-block PIRA Officer Commanding, to the seat of MP for Fermanagh and south Tyrone, and his subsequent martyrdom from starvation became what many consider the milepost by which Sinn Féin's ascendance to political power is said to have begun in earnest.<sup>212</sup>

Following the announcement of the policy of Police Primacy in 1976, the security forces identified the need for the appropriate force structure to implement this policy. Most notable of these were an adequate intelligence apparatus of the type required, particularly surveillance assets which would allow the collection of evidence for criminal case building, as well as a physical security apparatus capable of conducting interdiction and arrest in a highly non-permissive environment. Towards this end, both the RUC and UDR increased in size and scope beginning in 1977. Their growth would consist in large part of the establishment of these surveillance and weapons specialist organizations. In this regard, 1977 was the beginning of the "Dirty War" of covert surveillance and informer operations and only a year later the SAS would expand their covert operations from south Armagh to all of Northern Ireland in support of this new focus.

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<sup>211</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 17-18.

<sup>212</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 143.

This “Dirty War” would pay dividends in short order, providing the British with an extensive informer network within the PIRA and republican communities. Most famous of these were the Supergrass informers, terrorists who became ‘Queen’s Evidence’ and allowed for mass convictions based solely on their testimony. In 1981, one such Supergrass, Christopher Black, was arrested. His trial in 1983 resulted in the conviction of 35 of 39 charged. While many of the Supergrass convictions would later be overturned, during the interim the result was a decided blow to the morale, recruiting, and internal trust of the PIRA networks. Indeed, during the course of the “Dirty War,” republican terrorists were as likely to be killed by a member of their own organization for being a suspected “tout” as they were to be killed by a member of the security forces.<sup>213</sup>

The remainder of the period in question saw the emergence of a practice of lethal ambush despite the philosophical incongruity with the policy of Police Primacy. Beginning in 1982 with a series of RUC shootings to become known as the “shoot-to-kill” shootings, and followed subsequently over the next several years by several killings under ambush-like circumstances by both the RUC and SAS, the practice of lethal ambush became a matter of terrific controversy. Considered by many, on both sides of the debate, to be extra-legal killings, the “shoot-to-kill” controversy prompted the appointment of a special investigator in the person of John Stalker on May 24, 1984 to determine if an official and illegal policy existed which prompted this watershed shift in practices. Stalker’s findings were, however, overshadowed by a scandal surrounding his removal from the post – a turn of events that only served to exacerbate the sectarian tension created by rumors of an illegal “shoot-to-kill” policy. Meanwhile the practice continued throughout the remainder of the 1980s, with ambushes at Tamnamore, Drumrush, and Gransha in 1984, Strabane in 1985, Toomebridge in 1986, Loughgall in 1987, and in Gibraltar in March of 1988. The PIRA, meanwhile, responded with a campaign against isolated RUC stations in the Tyrone countryside – attacking stations at Ballygawley, Castlederg, and Carrickmore in 1985, and being ambushed in a famous attempt on the RUC station at Loughgall in May of 1987.

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<sup>213</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys’ Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 244.

## **B. INTELLIGENCE, REPRESSION POLICY, AND THE INSURGENCY: 1968 – 1976**

### **1. Intelligence Type and the Available Menu of Repression**

This period marked the reemergence of the modern nationalist movement in Northern Ireland into violence, the birth of the PIRA distinct from the Official IRA, and the reintroduction of British Army regulars into the province. Nationalism, however, was not entirely at the root of the 1968 Civil Rights Movement sweeping Northern Ireland. Rather, the events of 1968 were motivated largely by the sectarian discrimination typifying official pro-Protestant Unionist policy governing education, housing, jobs, and government, and the Catholic minority response over the preceding decades. Characteristic of the Civil Rights Movement was its ability to unify seemingly disparate demographics under one banner: nationalists, communists, liberals, trade unionists, radicals, students, professionals were all united, albeit briefly, towards common purpose, in this case the civil rights of the Catholic minority community in Northern Ireland.<sup>214</sup> This necessarily muddled the waters for the intelligence apparatus in identifying emerging threats, creating political opportunity for nascent insurgent mobilization and creating an increasingly severe paucity of intelligence, first for the RUC, and subsequently for all of the security services.

The locus of intelligence during these early years of the modern conflict lay with the RUC resident in Northern Ireland. Even with the introduction of the British Army, the RUC remained the primary source for population-centric intelligence, at least initially, as the Army intelligence apparatus did not possess an organic population-centric intelligence capability. As we will ultimately conclude, this should have been an ideal location for the appropriate intelligence apparatus to reside, and indeed the type of intelligence resident with the RUC was of the appropriate type. We will also contend, however, that context matters. Given the context as had developed during the preceding years of Catholic discrimination in Northern Ireland, the RUC had utterly delegitimized itself in Northern Ireland, having developed a firm reputation as partial and sectarian.

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<sup>214</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 40-41.

Indeed, as Urban writes, “in the early days of the Troubles the police force had aroused the hatred of the nationalist community by driving into their neighbourhoods firing machine guns and appearing to represent the repressive arm of the Protestant establishment.”<sup>215</sup> The ability of the RUC to conduct effective population-centric intelligence collection within the Catholic communities, and thus have some indication of the rising power and influence of the PIRA, had been compromised. The shortfall in intelligence in this case thus became a matter of capability rather than type. Nevertheless, the result was the same and the available menu of repression selection available to all security forces became increasingly limited as the RUC’s reputation and efficacy became increasingly compromised among the local Catholic communities.

*a. Policy Makers’ Threat Assessment*

Not least of the factors bearing on the inability of policy makers in both Stormont and Westminster to identify the nascent PIRA as emerging to become the principle insurgent threat during this period was the incredibly complex and opaque network of factions comprising the Civil Rights Movement. To be fair, staunch Unionists did acknowledge the participation of the Official IRA in the Civil Rights Movement, though they overestimated both the influence of the IRA and wrongly assumed that the movement was a means by which the IRA would foment a new campaign of violence.<sup>216</sup> Indeed, not only were the IRA of the 1960s considered a relic by the rising Catholic middle class<sup>217</sup> but the IRA itself had long since adopted a leftist ideology, adopting a policy of political agitation.<sup>218</sup> Thus, with the exception of the staunch Unionists, who may merely have been relying on charges of IRA provocation as a familiar rallying cry which held resonance for their constituents, most policy makers were focused on restoring the peace by at least appearing to attend to the discrimination of an aggrieved Catholic community.

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<sup>215</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys’ Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 18.

<sup>216</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 44.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

As time wore on, the threat of the emerging PIRA became more apparent. By the establishment of internment without trial, the role of PIRA influence in violent activities distinct from that of the IRA had become clear. Along with this acknowledgement came the recognition that an insurgency had emerged in Northern Ireland. Special Category status, or more specifically the reasoning behind its implementation, reflects the recognition of the nature of the fight as an insurgency.<sup>219</sup> Intended as a means to stop the hunger striking of PIRA meso- and macro-level prisoners, and thus mollify the insurgent infrastructure, Special Category status acknowledged the importance of population-centricity, though disastrously it failed to account for the manner in which such a policy might play into the hands of PIRA strategic framing.<sup>220</sup>

***b. Impact on the Intelligence Apparatus***

The Troubles were initially considered entirely political and violence was viewed as criminal in nature. Appropriate to this assessment, the existing RUC intelligence apparatus remained in place. However, essentially no change was implemented to account for the increasing crisis of legitimacy that the RUC faced in Catholic enclaves. Formal collection was limited largely to HUMINT agent running, which was performed by RUC Special Branch officers within the RUC stations, as it had been and would continue to be throughout the conflict. The RUC, while enjoying an appropriate *type* of intelligence in the form of law enforcement intelligence, suffered from an inability to collect ethnographic intelligence as well as insufficient operational capacity to control rising levels of violence in either sectarian camp. Perhaps most demonstrative of this was the inability of the RUC to prevent the violence leading up to and culminating in the Battle of Bogside, a Catholic enclave in Londonderry, and the spilling over of this battle into cities across Northern Ireland, most notably Belfast. In the

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<sup>219</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 137.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

aftermath of RUC actions during Bogside and in Belfast, and their inability to stop the targeting of Catholics by sectarian Protestants following in the wake of the RUC riot forces, the RUC effectively lost control of Northern Ireland.

Following Bogside, the British reintroduced the regular Army to Northern Ireland and relieved the RUC of its responsibility for security in the province. As a result, the Army intelligence apparatus assumed the lead on setting intelligence policy. This apparatus, however, consisted at this point almost entirely of unit intelligence officers operating at the tactical and operational levels. While trained in traditional military collection methods, these officers were inconsistent in their ability to adapt to population-centric methods of collection. This reflected an inherent mismatch of culture and capability as the Army had neither the population-centric intelligence capability organic, nor the experience and practices in place to transition to population-centric intelligence methods at the unit level. As a result, they relied on traditional military intelligence practices. As one might expect, this tended towards the targeting of “fielded forces.” Without a clear understanding of the PIRA threat, however, and with the Army executing the mission of maintaining law and order, few “fielded force” targets in the traditional military sense were available. The Army did not know who or what to target.

As the conflict continued throughout the mid-1970s, a parochial struggle for primacy of intelligence policy emerged between and within every conceivable organization party to the Troubles. This infighting was not unique to the Army and RUC as, indeed, MI5 and MI6 were also in competition for control over intelligence primacy in Northern Ireland and even internal to the RUC the Special Branch (SB) and Criminal Investigations Division (CID) vied for control of the RUC informer network. As MI5 won out over MI6, so too did the RUC ultimately win out over the Army, but not before the Army was able to establish competing intelligence organizations to ensure its continued relevancy and independent collection capability. Meanwhile, within the RUC,

the SB and CID were united in their efforts, though the extension of this coordination ended at the organizational boundary and proper intelligence apparatus integration across all parties would not occur until after this time period expired.<sup>221</sup>

*c. Available Repression Types*

Initially, the RUC intelligence apparatus, geared as it was towards law enforcement intelligence, allowed for Type 2 (reactive/selective) repression as is appropriate to a law enforcement organization. As the RUC became increasingly suspect among Republican communities, however, their ability to patrol and conduct law enforcement activities, to include population-centric intelligence collection, became compromised. Along with this compromise in intelligence capacity, came a concomitant reduction in the available menu of repression. Furthermore, with the introduction of the British Army and their assumption of mission primacy, without an intelligence apparatus tailored to support this mission, all security forces in Northern Ireland either became reliant upon the increasingly irrelevant RUC intelligence apparatus or were forced to rely on their own ill-suited intelligence apparatus. The lesser of evils was not always clear. The result was a marked shift to Types 3 (preemptive/indiscriminate) and 4 (reactive/indiscriminate) repression policy.

In August 1971, then Stormont Prime Minister Brian Faulkner, revisiting a policy from the 1950s, implemented the practice of internment without trial. Internment, a classically pre-emptive but indiscriminate form of repression, shows the devolution to Type 3 repression forced by the inability of RUC to continue effective law enforcement intelligence operations. Indeed, Urban writes,

Internment proved highly controversial because the intelligence on which it was based was so poor – a great many people with no connection with terrorism were held, whereas many senior members of the IRA escaped – and because it constituted an admission that the security forces were short of any evidence which could be presented in court against suspects.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 20-23.

<sup>222</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 14.

Perhaps the greatest manifestation of diminishing population-centric intelligence is evidenced in the Bloody Sunday shootings which opened the bloodiest year of the Troubles, the stage being set well before the January 1972 incident came to pass. Having operated in a diminishing intelligence environment, the Army found itself executing Type 4 repression in response to previous violent activity by the now emerged PIRA. Despite the now commonplace occurrence of such marches, but without a clear picture of the threat on the ground and claiming to be “under intensive attack from gunmen and from nailbombers,” British regulars fired indiscriminately into a civil rights march in Londonderry, killing 14.<sup>223</sup>

## **2. Repression Policy and Movement Intensity and Durability**

In the decade preceding the start of the Troubles, anti-Catholic policy from Stormont had largely closed political opportunity structures to the IRA. During the IRA campaign of 1956-62, “what principally defeated the IRA was the lack of support from the Catholic population of Northern Ireland. In 1956-62 the Catholics were far more cowed than they were in 1971. Then they were fearful of the RUC and the B-Specials, in awe of the British Army.”<sup>224</sup> The IRA, having shifted to a largely Marxist political approach to their nationalist objectives, had abandoned their role in defense of the Catholic population in Northern Ireland and suffered the consequences in terms of recruiting and popular support. The start of this time period saw the IRA widely considered with contempt by the Catholic population for their failure to provide protection against Protestant violence. Coogan writes, “In fact, the IRA posed very little threat to anyone during those days. So little that the disgusted inhabitants of the area, used to regarding the IRA in the traditional role of ‘the Defenders’, wrote up the letters IRA on gable walls as Irish Ran Away.”<sup>225</sup> The IRA meso-level mobilizing structures

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<sup>223</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 76-77. The B-Specials, officially the Ulster Special Constabulary, were a reserve police force that were widely considered within the Catholic communities of Northern Ireland as being staunchly anti-Catholic and pro-loyalist.

<sup>224</sup> Tim Pat Coogan, *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Search for Peace*, (Boulder, CO: Robert Rinehart Publishers, 1996), 123.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.



were unable to gain traction with the micro-level, and poorly armed meso-level IRA, unable to defend Catholic communities undermined traditional frames of the IRA as “Defenders.” As a result, Catholic communities established local defense leagues to serve this purpose. These defense leagues would eventually form fertile ground for the emergence of the PIRA, but initially were seen as community watch type organizations, further reducing the relevance of the IRA in the minds of Catholics. Furthermore, for a period of time following the introduction of the British Army, security forces were given a new lease on life and the Army in particular was seen as reasonably non-partisan. Thus, macro-level IRA strategic frames, claiming to be protectors of Catholic communities, failed to find fertile soil and these communities saw no need for a toothless IRA.

As the credibility of the IRA as a champion of the Catholic communities of Northern Ireland suffered in light of their inability to physically secure Catholics from Protestant sectarian violence their nationalist political agenda suffered as well. Nevertheless, the IRA continued to attempt mobilization for political agendas. Meanwhile, the PIRA began to emerge, recognizing the inherent opportunity of the times. As the RUC was increasingly delegitimized and repression policy shifted towards Type 3, political opportunity structures opened and the PIRA successfully developed strategic frames rooted in long held notions of British oppression, effectively shifting the debate from a civil rights movement in support of increased rights for Catholics to a fight for Irish nationalism in Northern Ireland.<sup>226</sup> As Type 4 repression emerged, the militant message of the PIRA mobilizing structures became increasingly popular, and the political solutions proposed by the IRA became bankrupt.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> The narrative of ‘British oppression’ had deep roots, stretching back to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century and resonated with local nationalists – even those not engaged in sectarian conflict. Coogan traces this narrative to the first Norman incursions into Ireland in the 1160s. Albeit small, Protestant membership in the IRA seems to bear this out – though Protestant membership seems to have declined and ended as the PIRA became increasingly sectarian in its violence during the 1970s.

<sup>227</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 60.

In this regard, Bloody Sunday was a turning point for the PIRA, and is perhaps that formative moment in the PIRA's history that marked its emergence as a truly credible insurgent threat to the sitting government. McKittrick, in his account of the fallout from Bloody Sunday, recounts the words of Father Edward Daly, present at the shooting and later Bishop of Derry, who is quoted as saying of Bloody Sunday:

A lot of the younger people in Derry who may have been more pacifist became quite militant as a result of it. People who were there on that day and who saw what happened were absolutely enraged by it and just wanted to seek some kind of revenge for it. In later years many young people I visited in prison told me quite explicitly that they would never have become involved in the IRA but for what they witnessed, and heard of happening, on Bloody Sunday.<sup>228</sup>

Indeed, McKittrick goes on to quote Gerry Adams in his memoirs as writing that following Bloody Sunday, "money, guns and recruits flooded into the IRA."<sup>229</sup> The growth of political opportunity in the wake of Type 3 and 4 repression allowed the PIRA to emerge in earnest.

Critical to movement mobilization during this time period, Special category status, meant to ease Catholic grievances over internment and bring the PIRA to the negotiating table, merely fed PIRA strategic frames as it essentially bestowed lawful combatant status on the PIRA prisoners. By ascribing to them Special Category status and all of its associated trappings William Whitelaw unwittingly made the PIRA into legal and credible combatants fighting an army of occupation. The status was irreconcilable with the policy of criminalization of the PIRA as it "was taken as an affirmation that jailed paramilitary inmates were in a sense political prisoners."<sup>230</sup> Once established, however, the damage was done. When first phased out for new prisoners, and ultimately repealed for all it merely inflamed the PIRA infrastructure and popular support. Having recognized a context of open political opportunity with Special Category status, the PIRA had been able to energize the mobilizing structures at the micro- and meso-levels, as well as develop focused strategic frames of British oppression

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<sup>228</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 77.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 137.

at the macro-level. Indeed, distinct, but equally useful PIRA strategic frames were supported by both the implementation and repeal of Special Category status. While the status reinforced framing of the PIRA as legitimate combatants, the repeal reinforced the frame of British oppression. Both frames resonated with the infrastructure and both acts played to the PIRA's ultimate benefit. As evidence, the policy, as implemented, allowed for the temporary release of a 25 year old Gerry Adams to participate in talks between the PIRA and the British government, implying that macro-level PIRA had indeed maneuvered for Special Category status as central to their strategy.<sup>231</sup> The subsequent ascendance of Sinn Fein, which we will discuss shortly, would appear to play this out.

### **3. Repression Policy and Subsequent Intelligence Policy and Operational Changes**

As this time period evolved, the lessons learned from Bogside, Internment, and Bloody Sunday pointed to the need to close political opportunity for the PIRA and to reestablish the physical security lost in the province with the growing impotence of the RUC. In addition to the policies of internment without trial and Special Category status already discussed, several operational changes typified the recognition of the need for these adjustments that merit further discussion. The first of these was the introduction of the British Army and the temporary subordination of RUC operations under the purview of military control. The second was the eventual adoption of a policy of police primacy and the opening of the allied "Dirty War." Both of these would last well into the next time period, but military control, internment, and Special Category status would eventually be discredited as ultimately ineffective means for countering the emerging PIRA insurgency, while both the policy of Police Primacy and the conduct of the "Dirty War" would prove critical to counterinsurgent success.

#### ***a. Establishment of Military Primacy***

The failure of the RUC in maintaining non-partisanship enflamed the sectarianism in Northern Ireland and made targets out of the police forces in the province.

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<sup>231</sup> Tim Pat Coogan, *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Search for Peace*, (Boulder, CO: Robert Rinehart Publishers, 1996), 146-7.

By the time of the Type 3 repression evidenced at the Battle of Bogside, and despite the replacement of the much maligned B-Specials with the Ulster Defense Regiment (UDR), the RUC had become largely impotent in conducting its operational responsibilities. Published in October 1970, the Hunt Report blamed the RUC for the security decline in Northern Ireland and policy makers “in Whitehall believed nationalist passions would be soothed if the RUC was reduced virtually to a force of unarmed warrant-servers.”<sup>232</sup> The introduction of the British Army back to Northern Ireland resulted, and was hoped would allow for more legitimacy and quell violence.

The subordination of RUC operations under military control put responsibility for provincial security in the hands of the British Army senior commanders; most notably the Commander of Land Forces (CLF) and General Officer Commanding (GOC). The desired effect was achieved for a brief honeymoon period. Being seen as non-sectarian “the arrival of the soldiers was welcomed by Catholics and brought a temporary respite from the violence.”<sup>233</sup> The honeymoon was short lived, however, and the Republican vs. Loyalist nature of the conflict inevitably biased the British Army in favor of the Loyalist community. As Urban writes, “the loyalists did not attack the security forces and the number of incidents attributed to them declined in the late 1970’s. Many Army officers [saw] combating the better-organized republican terrorist groups as the real challenge.”<sup>234</sup>

#### ***b. Establishment of Police Primacy and the “Dirty War”***

Throughout this period, the operational parochialism between the RUC and the Army steadily increased and “was often focused on intelligence matters, the lifeblood of the anti-terrorist effort.”<sup>235</sup> Even at an early stage, however, the recognition that Police Primacy would ultimately be required to defeat the PIRA was guiding policy

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<sup>232</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 15.

<sup>233</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 56.

<sup>234</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 19.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

making. McKittrick writes, “As one RUC chief inspector puts it, ‘We will never make permanent progress until we have no military support. It is far better for the IRA for the British war machine to be seen bearing down on them.’”<sup>236</sup>

In 1976, under the leadership of Kenneth Newman, the RUC won the fight for primacy at the policy level. Acceptance of the importance of Police Primacy at the highest policy levels as a sound, long term solution to the Irish Question is also reflected in the intelligence apparatus in Britain. As the RUC achieved primacy over the military in Northern Ireland, so too did MI5 achieve ascendancy over MI6 in all intelligence matters pertaining to the province.<sup>237</sup> Operationally, through the redevelopment of its informer and HUMINT networks, the RUC had begun to reestablish its ethnographic intelligence capability and still maintained preeminence in this regard over the Army.<sup>238</sup> What it lacked, however, was a mechanism to enforce the peace, and consequently the law enforcement intelligence associated with routine police work.

Police Primacy would require cops on the beat, and in Northern Ireland, this meant riot forces and police with the arms and training to conduct law enforcement activities in a virtual war zone. In this regard, the RUC was lagging far behind Army in terms of enforcement capabilities and so began building organizational capacity for weapons and surveillance specialists. Dubbed the “Dirty War,” the next interval saw the emergence of diverse surveillance and intelligence organizations within the RUC and the Army. Geared towards the collection of prosecutable law enforcement intelligence and

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<sup>236</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 19.

<sup>237</sup> MI5 is the British domestic intelligence agency and is largely focused on internal threats to Great Britain. MI6 is the British foreign intelligence agency, roughly equivalent to the Central Intelligence Agency in the United States and more focused on external threats to Great Britain. Interestingly, the ascendancy, natural or otherwise, of police vs. military intelligence was evident overseas as well with the FBI and Continental law enforcement equivalent intelligence organizations taking lead in working with MI5 to address local PIRA recruiting and operations.

<sup>238</sup> Indeed, being native to Northern Ireland, and more often than not native to the towns and rural areas within which they patrolled, each RUC officer was essentially an ethnographic intelligence sensor and principle source in and of himself.

the development of wide and deep informer networks throughout the PIRA, the “Dirty War” employed covert military and intelligence practices in support of law enforcement operations.

## **C. INTELLIGENCE, REPRESSION POLICY, AND THE INSURGENCY: 1976 – 1982**

### **1. Intelligence Type and the Available Menu of Repression**

This period is characterized by the official declaration of the policy of Police Primacy and increasing efforts to integrate and coordinate Army and RUC activities as a result of the clear enumeration of this policy. Attendant on this policy directive was the expansion across the breadth of the intelligence apparatus to include much needed and more sophisticated informer handling, surveillance, and weapons specialist organizations. Indeed, during this period the number of such organizations more than doubled within the RUC and Army. As well, and critical to the successful adjustment to such significant structural changes, was the appointment of leaders to key positions in the hierarchy with a shared vision of the importance of implementing Police Primacy both operationally and culturally within their respective organizations. Indeed, it is perhaps this latter point that was most helpful – allowing subtle, but important shifts in the organizational cultures of disparate organizations towards belief in the common purpose of Police Primacy.

Operationally, this period also saw the role of the regular Army as counterinsurgent diminishing, ultimately relegating them to the status of well armed security details for RUC officers on patrol. This change not only reflected the increased support for and pursuit of the law enforcement operations attendant to a policy of Police Primacy, but also reflected the increasing importance of those Army units involved in the “Dirty War” of covert surveillance and operations in support of law enforcement goals. By the end of this period, organizations such as the SAS and 14 Company had completely supplanted the regular Army forces in Northern Ireland as the locus of military operational and intelligence effort in the counterinsurgent fight.

**a. *Policy Makers' Threat Assessment***

At this point in the Troubles, the PIRA had emerged in the minds of British policy makers as the principle threat to security in the province. Along with the recognition of this fight as a counterinsurgent fight, and perhaps most relevant to the conduct of future repression and the adaptation of the intelligence apparatus, was the subsequent recognition of the critical importance of Police Primacy if Britain ever hoped to defeat this insurgent threat. Consequently, the British identified the need for population-centric intelligence among the insurgent infrastructure, and indeed the potential that a robust informer network offered, in order to effectively target the PIRA mobilizing structures at all levels of analysis. As one CLF put it in a BBC interview some years later, "I always used to say, 'Bring me a terrorist who can work for me and don't give me a dead terrorist'."<sup>239</sup>

**b. *Impact on the Intelligence Apparatus***

The policy of Police Primacy set the conditions for an increase in the necessity of population-centric intelligence to support law enforcement operations. The RUC at this point suffered a dearth of both ethnographic and law enforcement intelligence as a result of ever decreasing potency on the streets of Northern Ireland. Furthermore, neither the Army nor MI5 enjoyed a law enforcement intelligence component resident within their organizations. Necessarily then, the intelligence apparatus needed to be rebuilt to support the new policy and a period of expansive growth in both the breadth and depth of the intelligence apparatus ensued. During this growth, increased emphasis was placed on the development of covert surveillance organizations and informer recruiting and handling organizations. As well, the RUC developed organic weapons specialists to address the problem of their absolute inability by now to patrol the streets of Northern Ireland without an Army security escort, much less conduct interdiction autonomously. The number of covert intelligence organizations

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<sup>239</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 83.

more than doubled during this time period from only four in 1974 to nine by 1982 (See Figure 9. Development of Covert Operations Units). On this matter, Urban writes:

Beginning in 1977, intelligence resources in Northern Ireland were switched away from the publicly visible ‘Green Army’ to small, highly trained units of specialists, whose operations were cloaked in secrecy...Whereas in 1975 the Army had fewer than 100 soldiers in Ulster whose main task was clandestine surveillance, by 1980 this number had trebled. Similarly, the Royal Ulster

Constabulary (RUC), which began to assume overall responsibility for the campaign against terrorism in 1976, also developed a variety of specialist surveillance and firearms units of its own.<sup>240</sup>

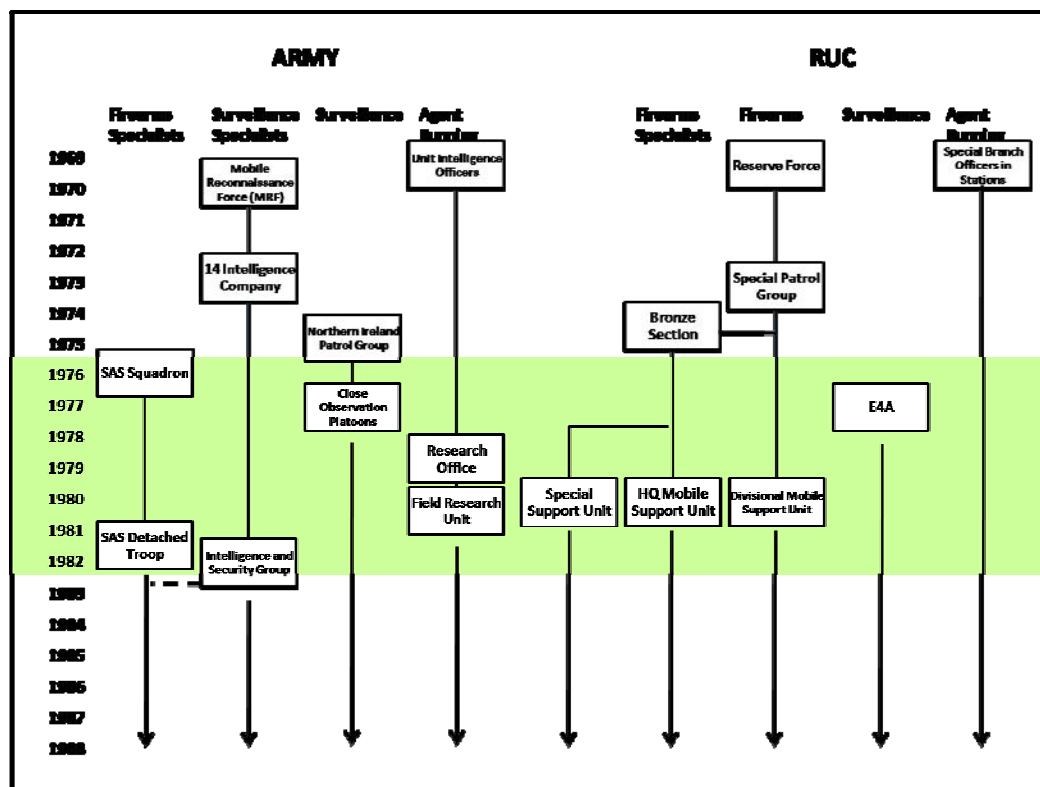


Figure 9. Development of Covert Operations Units<sup>241</sup>

Perhaps just as important as the creation of necessary operational intelligence units, policy makers in all corners recognized the need for increased

<sup>240</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 11.

<sup>241</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 255.



integration between the RUC, the Army, and the British intelligence organizations. Towards this end, there were a number of attempts to establish coordination cells and security Czars with authority, or at least influence, over intelligence and operations in Northern Ireland. One such attempt was the establishment of the Director and Coordinator of Intelligence (DCI), sent by the British to Stormont in the mid-1970s to integrated intelligence efforts across agencies and functions. The DCI, without any authority, failed however in influencing either the RUC or the Army and the position became largely irrelevant.<sup>242</sup> In 1977, in his capacity as head of the intelligence section of the British Army General Staff, Brigadier James Glover prepared a paper titled, *Future Organisation of Military Intelligence in Northern Ireland*, in which he proposed the necessity of central control over the intelligence effort in Northern Ireland and the importance of providing the DCI with the authority required to compel such changes.<sup>243</sup> Glover's recommendations, along with the work of then RUC chief, Kenneth Newman would do much to shape the character of intelligence and repression policy in Northern Ireland in the years to come. Indeed Glover would shortly be appointed CLF in Northern Ireland in February 1979 and have the opportunity to implement many of the suggestions proposed in his influential paper.

An effort enjoying more success than the DCI was the Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TCG), the first of which was established in 1978. This organization, consisting of a liaison from both the RUC CID and SB and each of the Army specialist units, "was probably the most important of all the steps taken during the late 1970s towards enhanced information-gathering."<sup>244</sup> The TCG was primarily active during operations, serving as a clearing house for coordination between surveillance, informer handling, and covert tactical units.

The recognition by policy makers of the absolute importance of Police Primacy also led to the assignment of other appropriate personalities into positions of key

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<sup>242</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 24.

<sup>243</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 94.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

importance in the security apparatus of Northern Ireland. The synergy of having several of these leaders present concurrently during this time period led to an increase in operational and intelligence integration. From 1976-78 Northern Ireland saw the arrival of several key figures who each possessed a vision for provincial security that either directly or indirectly supported the policy of Police Primacy. In 1977 both the GOC, Lieutenant General Timothy Creasey, and CLF, Major General Dick Trant, were newly appointed officers who believed in the utility of covert operations in both reducing Army casualties and putting pressure on the PIRA.<sup>245</sup> Their perspective was shared by the Northern Ireland Secretary of State, Roy Mason, whom had been in office only a year longer. While wary of an increase in SAS operations, the RUC leadership personified by Chief Constable Kenneth Newman, nonetheless saw the value of the covert nature of SAS presence over the overt nature of regular Army operations which was both detrimental to Police Primacy and a source of resentment within the republican communities.<sup>246</sup> Then, as previously mentioned, in 1979 Major General Glover was appointed CLF and brought with him his notions of integrated intelligence across disparate agencies and functions as enumerated in his previous work.

The effect of so many reasonably like-minded leaders within the security and intelligence apparatus was to subtly shift organizational cultures in the direction of inter-agency cooperation and integration. While much work was left to be done, it was during this period that the first successes in this regard were enjoyed and the work towards intelligence integration in support of Police Primacy was begun in earnest.

### *c. Available Repression Types*

As the British entered this time period, repression policy had suffered from the paucity of available population-centric intelligence and Type 4 repression had become evident in such incidents as the Bloody Sunday shootings. This period, however, saw the locus of intelligence type move fully into the camp of population-centric

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<sup>245</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 12.

<sup>246</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 12.

intelligence and as the emphasis shifted the availability of that intelligence required for selective or preemptive repression increased. Thus the available menu of repression selection grew to include Types 2 and 3 repression once again. The policy of Police Primacy placed an emphasis not only on the ascendance of both ethnographic and law enforcement intelligence, but also more law enforcement-like repression practices in countering the insurgent threat. The period of SAS arrests in lieu of ambushes from 1978-1983 seems to play this out. Indeed, during the five years from November 24, 1978 until December 4, 1983, not a single PIRA man was shot by the SAS in Northern Ireland.<sup>247</sup> Rather the SAS exercised the practice of arrest, a manner of Type 2 repression, in keeping with the law enforcement culture of Police Primacy.

Within the prisons, the repeal of Special Category status and the inflexibility of the British towards the prison protests were also very clearly forms of Type 2 repression. While largely unpopular within the republican communities of Northern Ireland, the nature of the protests they fomented are in keeping with our model. This subsequent unrest was reasonably intense on emergence; nevertheless the intensity was relatively short lived and soon gave way to more enduring, but less intense sentiment among the insurgent infrastructure.

## **2. Repression Policy and Movement Intensity and Durability**

While violent PIRA operations certainly continued during this period, the organization was making a concerted effort at the time to develop credible and legitimate policy influence through the political efforts of Sinn Fein. Rising PIRA leaders such as Gerry Adams recognized the importance of this tack in the eventual achievement of the PIRAs nationalist objectives. To this end, movement mobilization at the time became championed from curious and unexpected corners. Originally pursued at the objection of the PIRA leadership on the outside, the various protests of PIRA prisoners in the Maze prison quickly attracted media attention and sympathetic support from around the world. In doing so, and in light of the staunch inflexibility of British policy makers in their

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<sup>247</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 12.

response, they tapped into the power of popular opinion and the PIRA leadership quickly identified and deferred to the potential of their protests for movement mobilization and negotiating leverage over their adversaries.<sup>248</sup> It is in this way that the Dirty Protest and hunger strikes became one of the principle and more successful endeavors of the PIRA and Sinn Fein.

*a. The Repeal of Special Category Status and the Dirty Protest*

In March 1976, policy makers, in the person of the Northern Ireland Secretary, Merlyn Rees, determined to repeal Special Category status. This move was taken as means to undermine IRA pretenses to legitimacy, which they had successfully leveraged by comparing Special Category status to prisoners-of-war status despite British policy aimed at criminalizing terrorism and terrorists.<sup>249</sup> In response, PIRA prisoners in the Maze prison and H-blocks went “on the blanket,” refusing to wear prison uniforms in defiance of their new status as criminals rather than POWs.<sup>250</sup> The British, unwilling to waver in the face of the protests, allowed them only their blankets and eventually, in response to the destruction of prison furnishings in protest, removed all furniture from the cells as well. This protest continued for nearly two years with virtually no success and little prospect of achieving any - going largely unnoticed outside of the prisons and staunch republican areas of Northern Ireland.<sup>251</sup>

In March 1978, the prisoners in the Maze struck on a brilliant, albeit unorthodox campaign that effectively brought worldwide attention to PIRA prisoners and by extension the conflict in Northern Ireland. During this protest, the prisoners refused to

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<sup>248</sup> British policy makers during this time shared a singular unwillingness to publicly accommodate demands from the protestors. This inflexibility, while keeping the protests relatively in check in practice, was to play against them to great effect in the domestic and international popular press. McKittrick writes of Margret Thatcher, a reasonably new Prime Minister at the time, as viewing these confrontations as a battle between “good and evil,” and thus not a matter of debate or negotiation. Her perspective was unquestionably shaped by the assassination of her close friend Airey Neave, whom the republican group INLA had killed with a bomb in March of 1979. Indeed, it is her steadfastness during this period that is often credited with earning her the moniker Iron Lady.

<sup>249</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 138.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 138-139.

remove uneaten food and bodily waste from their cells. When prison guards made attempts to do so, the prisoners used the waste as a means of fending off their attempts. Eventually, the British determined that the prisoners would merely live with their waste and would only occasionally remove the prisoners long enough for a routine cleaning of the cells and removal of waste. In response, the prisoners began to coat the walls of their cells with their waste in efforts to hinder British efforts to keep living conditions reasonable.

The “Dirty Protest,” as it became known, was not planned or managed by the macro-level mobilizing structure outside the prison walls, rather it was the invention of the very meso-level members implementing the practice. Indeed, initially at least, the macro-level leadership outside objected to the practice, only changing their opinions once they recognized the incredible public relations capital of the campaign. Living condition during this campaign became so bad that a broad base of sympathetic support began to build, even outside of the republican communities. Following the very public visit of Cardinal Tomas O Fiaich, the head of the Catholic Church in Ireland, images of the conditions inside the prison became a major point of PIRA propaganda worldwide – creating an untenable public relations nightmare for the British.<sup>252</sup> Republican support within the micro-level infrastructure surged and meso-level mobilizing structure morale within the prisons soared despite their living conditions. The Dirty Campaign was immensely successful in feeding the PIRA strategic frames of British oppression, however the surge in support was nevertheless short lived.

#### ***b. Hunger Strikes***

In October 1980, the Dirty Protest gave way to the first of two hunger strikes which, with the exception of a short reprieve during the winter of 1980-81, would last through the summer of 1981. As with the Dirty Protest, the hunger strike was initially opposed by PIRA leadership outside of the prison. Gerry Adams, in a letter to the prisoners, wrote of the PIRA official position, “we are tactically, strategically,

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<sup>252</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 140.

physically and morally opposed to a hungerstrike.”<sup>253</sup> Nevertheless, the prisoners pursued the tactic of the hunger strike absent the official sanction of the PIRA. McKittrick writes:

One prisoner who was to spend seventy days on hungerstrike later wrote that if the IRA had forbidden the move “it would have been an absolute disaster because people would have gone on hungerstrike anyway, and it would have caused a major split within the IRA.”<sup>254</sup>

The result of the first of these hunger strikes was abject failure in securing any objectives. The strike was called off during a brief interim of confusion when the first prisoner to suffer serious physical malady as a result of the starvation had to be evacuated to a hospital. Not only weren’t objectives achieved, but the failure and the confused manner in which the hunger strike was ended had the added detriment of causing the PIRA to lose face. This set the stage, however, for the second hunger strike as the remaining prisoners felt that the failure of the first had to be avenged to save face. This necessarily raised the stakes for the second strike, creating the context within which the only acceptable resolution of the hunger strike was the folding of the British to prisoner demands, or the death, and thus martyrdom, of the prisoners.<sup>255</sup>

The PIRA commander in the maze, Bobby Sands, became a pivotal figure in the ultimate successes enjoyed by this second hunger strike. In response to the confusion of the first, a plan was developed to phase the second hunger strike so as to maintain continuous and growing pressure on the British until such time as they relented. Sands would begin the hunger strike, and did so on March 1, 1981, followed every two weeks by another prisoner beginning his hunger strike. In this way, the British would, in short time, be faced with the deaths of starving prisoners on a continuous and steady basis. Sands, an attractive and affable young man whose smiling visage made the rounds

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<sup>253</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 141.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 141.

of media outlets worldwide with the introduction of the hunger strike, became a minor “rock star” from the public relations campaign that the PIRA was able to shape around this second hunger strike.<sup>256</sup>

*c. Sinn Fein on the Ascendance*

Opportunity came knocking for the PIRA and Sinn Fein when the MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone died suddenly during the first week of Sands’ hunger strike. Sands, who had already become wildly popular within a republican community reverent of martyrdom, was handily elected to fill the post, delivering a tremendous coup to Sinn Fein in its pursuit of political legitimacy and opening political opportunity for PIRA recruitment of support. Indeed, “Sands’s victory was one of the key events in the development of Sinn Fein as an electoral force.”<sup>257</sup> The political opportunity opened by Sands’ election created a sense of opportunity among Catholics and an acknowledgement for the first time that change could be achieved effectively at the polls. This event marked the start of Sinn Fein success during elections and its rise as a truly legitimate and influential political force.

Sands’ death from starvation on May 5, 1981 created tremendous fallout for Britain and its stalemate with the hunger strikers, both domestically and abroad. In Northern Ireland, Sands became a martyr of legendary proportions and his death prompted protests across the province, many of which were responded to by British security forces in heavy handed fashion, feeding the fire of republican unrest.<sup>258</sup> This unrest, and the subsequent British response, continued to reinforce PIRA strategic frames of British oppression and supported the mobilization of the micro-level into both the insurgent infrastructure and the growing support at the ballot box.

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<sup>256</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 141-143.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>258</sup> David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago, IL: New Amsterdam Books, 2002), 143.

### **3. The Effects of Repression Policy on Subsequent Intelligence and Operational Policy Changes**

The development of a robust and substantial intelligence apparatus focused on the collection and processing of population-centric intelligence allowed for more specificity in arrest. The shift of repression to Type 2 had the peripheral effect of creating a context within which potential informers were more likely to cooperate. This became a self-reinforcing cycle with indiscriminate PIRA informer “witch hunts” undermining their “Catholic protector” strategic frames and subsequently weakening their mobilizing structures. . The pairing of the overt policy of Police Primacy with the covert practice of the “Dirty War” was immensely successful in allowing for Type 2 repression as a counter to the PIRA threat. The informer network that the British built during this time period led to the practice of spectacular prosecutorial efforts in the form of the Supergrass trials. These trials, and the self-defeating PIRA response in light of the mass convictions these trials were able to obtain, were demonstrative of the power of Police Primacy in the counterinsurgent fight.

#### ***a. Informers***

The practice of PIRA arrests in lieu of SAS ambushes which typified the Type 2 repression selection during this time period led to the growth of a significant PIRA informer network reporting to the British for years to come. Indeed, informer running became a mainstay of the British effort to defeat the PIRA and by prompting an often indiscriminate and violent PIRA response within its mobilizing structures, this practice began to isolate the PIRA from the republican communities of Northern Ireland. Urban notes one senior Army officer as having stated, “the crucial line to be crossed is one where passive acceptance in the Catholic community moves to a readiness to betray.”<sup>259</sup> The groundwork for this campaign was laid during this time-period.

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<sup>259</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 101.



This happened for several reasons. First, and quite simply, those terrorists being arrested and brought in for interrogation, rather than being killed on the streets, were available for recruitment into the program. Second, the perceived moderation of the British arrests, relative to prior practices during military primacy, began to give the security forces a less nefarious reputation than had been suffered, for instance, during the days of the B-Specials. The increasing efficacy with which they practiced law enforcement strengthened the motivation for potential informers to cooperate both from a pragmatic perspective (as a potential future prisoner) and as a matter of having a less intense sense of being immediately aggrieved as motivation to be uncooperative.<sup>260</sup> British professionalism in law enforcement undermined PIRA strategic frames.

As well, given the PIRA mistrust over the level of “tout” infiltration, many members of the organization became suspect merely as a result of having been picked up by the police. For some, perhaps already disenfranchised with a particular facet of the PIRA leadership, this proved sufficient to make it worthwhile to cooperate with the British. As Urban concludes:

It is probable that the IRA’s attempts to flush out informers slowly erode[d] its cadre of determined supporters. Young volunteers joining the IRA in the 1980s were almost as likely to die at the hands of their own comrades through accusations of informing as they were to be killed by SAS.<sup>261</sup>

The result was a weakening of the PIRA mobilizing structures at both the micro- and meso-levels of the organization. Indeed, the massive PIRA campaign to root out and purge the organization of informers did more to damage PIRA recruitment, mobilization, and strategic framing than any direct efforts by the British to accomplish these ends ever could have. “The republican community is rendered increasingly paranoid and must eliminate a proportion of its own membership in an attempt to retain its integrity.”<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 101.

<sup>261</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 244.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

## **D. INTELLIGENCE, REPRESSION POLICY, AND THE INSURGENCY: 1982 – 1988**

### **1. Intelligence Type and the Available Menu of Repression**

This period is most notable for the emergence of a distinct shift in SAS and RUC operational procedure incongruous with the procedures of the preceding six years and the official policy of Police Primacy. It is during this period that the SAS and RUC begin to implement the practice of lethal ambush in lieu of conducting arrests of the PIRA in Northern Ireland. Indeed, as this time period does not differ substantively from the previous in terms of structural or policy changes in the repression, operational, or intelligence apparatus, our interest in this time period is focused on this incongruity between policy and implementation and the implications that it holds for the predictive and descriptive utility of our model.

Also to emerge in this time-period, and worth consideration, were the Supergrass trials, a series of highly publicized criminal indictments of large numbers of PIRA members. These trials were notable for their reliance, in some cases to the exclusion of any other evidence, on the testimony of a single Supergrass informer to secure the blanket convictions of dozens of PIRA members at a time. These Supergrass informers, themselves turned PIRA members, became the very public face of the covert agent running networks the British had come to rely upon in their counterinsurgent fight against the PIRA.

At this point in the conflict, the threat of the PIRA as an insurgent organization was clearly understood both in Stormont and in Britain. The British threat assessment did not appreciably change during this time. As well, having had several years to develop a population-centric intelligence apparatus during the mid-to-late 1970s, the British enjoyed the full gamut of population-centric intelligence organizations, informer networks, etc. during this time period. No structural changes in the intelligence apparatus occurred during this period or subsequently.

**a. Available Repression Types**

As with the previous time period, available intelligence allows for the selection of Type 2 repression. Indeed, the breadth and depth of the informer network by this point would have allowed Type 1 repression in many cases. Nevertheless, the SAS and RUC began implementing the practice of lethal ambush, despite enjoying intelligence that just a few years earlier had been sufficient to allow for arrests. The security forces, viewed this practice as merely another form of Type 2 repression. In the opinion of many security force members, the ambush of a PIRA involved in terrorist activity, whether or not he posed an immediate threat to the ambushing unit, was a “clean kill.”<sup>263</sup> The matter of repression type here now becomes somewhat confused. Lethal ambushes of known PIRA, seen as a “clean kill”, and thus Type 1 repression, by the British, were interpreted as extrajudicial by republican communities if the target was engaged with lethal force before he presented an immediate threat to the police or the Army. This difference of perspective created disequilibrium between British practice and popular perceptions.

**2. Repression Policy and Movement Intensity and Durability**

**a. Shoot-to-Kill, Martyrdom, and Popular Support**

From October through December 1982, a series of three RUC lethal ambushes ended the period of arrests that had been practiced over the previous 5 years. Known as the “shoot-to-kill” shootings, these three events resulted in great speculation both in Northern Ireland and in Westminster that a new policy of “shoot-to-kill” had been implemented among the security forces. Official inquiries into the matter were replete with inconsistencies that conspiracy theories took root and likely abound to this day. While in his work, which largely seeks to investigate the allegations of an official “shoot-to-kill” policy, Urban concludes that there is no evidence that an official policy ever

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<sup>263</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 164.

existed, he nevertheless concedes that there was an unofficial and implicit acceptance at the operator level that such activities would not only be overlooked, but were indeed sanctioned.<sup>264</sup>

While it is unclear how the shift in practice occurred from the previous time period, what is clear is that the British practice of ambush became viewed as unlawful within the republican population. This creates an interesting paradox between PIRA strategic frames and public perception of the lethal ambush of PIRA members engaging in terrorist activities. By this point in time, the PIRA had for years been claiming status as lawful combatants fighting an army of occupation in Northern Ireland. Our discussion of Special Category status and the subsequent protests upon its repeal are illustrative of the PIRA strategic framing of their combatant status. Within staunchly republican communities, this frame, and the attendant combatant status, was frequently accepted. Yet with the perception of lethal ambushes on PIRA members actively engaged in terrorist acts as being extra-legal killings, we see an incongruity with the accepted status of these very same PIRA members as combatants. Combatant status, it would seem from this, was dependent not upon whether the PIRA was actively engaged in terrorist activity, but upon whether the PIRA was posing an immediate threat to the security forces at the time of the ambush.

Reason would suggest that this incongruity would work against PIRA strategic framing, and indeed against their claims to legitimacy and thus ability to mobilize at the micro- and macro- level.<sup>265</sup> In practice, however, this was not the case. Rather, the practice of lethal ambush, while restricting the political opportunity structure at the meso-level for purely pragmatic reasons (PIRA members were far more likely to wind up dead than in jail given this practice), counter-intuitively underscored PIRA strategic framing by playing to the historical reverence for martyrdom.<sup>266</sup> Ultimately, the

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<sup>264</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 164.

<sup>265</sup> In the simplest conventional military terms, a combatant, once identified as such is considered hostile and a legal target.

<sup>266</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 82-83.

strength of PIRA strategic frames and the rallying of micro- and meso-level mobilizing structures possible through martyrdom were more influential than was the slight closing of political opportunity structure as a result of the increased risk associated with PIRA activities in this environment. Sympathetic and active support for both the PIRA and Sinn Fein resulted.

***b. The Supergrass Trials***

During the 1970s, the growth of the informer network within the PIRA was devastating to the internal trust of the organization. Of all the informers run by the British, those known as the Supergrasses achieved most towards the dual purposes of fulfilling law enforcement objectives by providing prosecutable evidence and testimony, and of compromising PIRA trust within its own network. These informers provided evidence and testimony during a series of highly publicized trials emerging during the early-1980s and continuing for several years. Ultimately though, the lasting effect of the Supergrass trials is a matter of some debate. These trials imprisoned hundreds of PIRA members over the course of their duration, and did so in a much more selective manner than did internment.<sup>267</sup> Yet much of the testimony of the Supergrasses would later be discredited and the evidence thrown out as uncorroborated during the appeals process.

It can be argued that the frequently indiscriminate PIRA efforts to uncover touts initially diminished the efficacy of their strategic framing, particularly those purporting their status as the protector of Catholic communities, as well as the strength of their mobilizing structures, thus leading to more informers. Over the long term, however, the PIRA turned the Supergrass trials into an opportunity, embracing a policy of amnesty, which, coupled with the insular nature of the Irish Catholic community, created an environment where informer Mea Culpa and Supergrass self-repudiation became preferable to living in safety, but in isolation and exile. This improved the standing of

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<sup>267</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 134.

PIRA strategic frames by allowing them to undermine the legitimacy and credibility of the British informer campaign and judicial system and to cast aspersions on the testimony of any remaining informers.<sup>268</sup>

## E. CONCLUSION

As in Vietnam, ultimately British policy makers succeeded in identifying the PIRA threat and crafting a population-centric strategy of Police Primacy, characterized by selective and increasingly preemptive repression policy. They were also highly successful in creating the population-centric intelligence apparatus required to collect both ethnographic and law enforcement-type intelligence, paired with the necessary operational elements required for exploiting this intelligence. Throughout this case study we can trace the process of available intelligence leading to repression selection from a finite menu of available policy choices, and again on to consequent PIRA intensity and durability in light of these policy choices. We can also observe the process of organizational learning in each case which led to ever increasing population-centric intelligence capabilities and in most cases the application of increasingly selective and preemptive repression policy.

Problematic is the incongruity between policy and practice during the final time period wherein the disparity between security force and popular perceptions of selectivity in the practice of lethal ambush failed to reconcile. Nonetheless, such an exception sheds light on the limitations of our model in its current manifestation and ways in which it might be improved.

Also evident in this case study is unqualified necessity for integration within the intelligence and security apparatus, both horizontally and vertically. The case of Northern Ireland illustrates to us the absolute utility of Police Primacy in pursuing population-centric methods of counterinsurgency. Inherent in such a policy are all of the trappings of preemptive and selective repression promised by robust law enforcement and ethnographic intelligence and law enforcement means of enforcement.

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<sup>268</sup> Mark Urban, *Big Boys' Rules: The Secret Struggle against the IRA*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 135.

## **VI. LESSONS LEARNED, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Our investigations into the insurgencies in Vietnam and Northern Ireland suggest a number of lessons to be learned related to the conduct of intelligence and operations in the counterinsurgent fight. As well, when we apply our model to the study of these cases, a number of implications in terms of the prescriptive and descriptive utility of the model become readily apparent. Finally, our examination of the relationship between counterinsurgent intelligence, repression, and operations leads us to the development of a number of recommendations for consideration in both future counterinsurgency policy and planning and continued research into this subject. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to the discussion of these lessons learned, implications for the model, and recommendations for future operations and research.

### **A. LESSONS LEARNED**

The narratives of the counterinsurgent endeavors in Vietnam and Northern Ireland clearly and consistently point to the necessity of robust HUMINT collection capabilities, and the enduring importance of close integration of policy maker, intelligence apparatus, and operational component. These cases also reveal that, while traditional tactical military intelligence, particularly that relating to target interdiction at the meso- and macro-levels, is necessary in countering an insurgency, it is not sufficient.<sup>269</sup> This is most evident in efforts to target insurgent infrastructure and in both reducing political opportunity for the insurgent and undermining his ability to mobilize popular support. Only with the inclusion, and often primacy, of population-centric intelligence can the state overcome an insurgent information advantage and hope to bring its force advantage to bear. Nevertheless, for the intelligence apparatus to nimbly and adequately adapt as necessary, the policy maker must ultimately recognize both the nature of the conflict with which he is faced as an insurgency, and the necessity of population-centric intelligence integration, and perhaps primacy, in countering the insurgent threat.

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<sup>269</sup> In this case, we refer to target interdiction in the commonly used sense of the application of kinetic military operations.

## 1. Intelligence Type and Intra-functional Integration

The relative importance of each type of intelligence collection method useful in countering a given insurgency is highly contextual.<sup>270</sup> That said, in each of our cases HUMINT emerged as approaching prominence. The applicability of any of these collection methods depends heavily on the characteristics of the target, but also, and to a lesser degree, on the capabilities of the collector. Should a particular insurgent only marginally rely on technological means of communication (telephones, radios, email, etc...), then counterinsurgent emphasis on those collection methods associated with the targeting of technological sources of communication are senseless. In such an instance, HUMINT may be the only collection method of any practical and substantive effect. Even in technologically dense environments, however, where insurgent communications and counterinsurgent collection methods rely heavily on such technology as telephones, radios, and email, the intelligence apparatus tasked with collection can easily become overwhelmed by the enormous volume of raw information from such prolific sources. In such an environment, the relative importance of HUMINT does not diminish. Rather, HUMINT serves as the foundation for focusing the lens of other collection methods; providing specificity for the locus of subsequent collection. In effect, HUMINT is that collection method which most frequently reveals the insurgent fishes from amongst the sea of people within which they swim.

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<sup>270</sup> Intelligence collection methods are defined by five sources: human intelligence (HUMINT), signals intelligence (SIGINT), imagery intelligence (IMINT) open source intelligence (OSINT), and measurement and signatures intelligence (MASINT). HUMINT is intelligence gained from agents who have access to information desired by the intelligence apparatus and have been recruited to acquire and deliver that information. SIGINT is information that is gleaned from intercepted electronic communications and other signals. IMINT is information gained from photographs or other sources of imagery. OSINT is information acquired from openly available sources such as publications and speeches. Finally, MASINT, as described by the US military's Joint Publication 2-0, *Joint Intelligence*, is "intelligence obtained by quantitative and qualitative analysis of data... for the purpose of identifying any distinctive features associated with the emitter or sender." Essentially, for the purposes of the counterinsurgent, MASINT is a way of looking at technical data collected from other sources in a way that reveals signatures of insurgent activity.



HUMINT is only effective if it is accurate, timely, and relevant. The selection and handling of a source and the analysis of his information is therefore of preeminent import in the HUMINT intelligence cycle. It is critical, therefore, that both HUMINT collectors and “back end” processors, exploiters, analysts, and disseminators are all properly staffed, trained, funded, and focused.

As is evident in both cases, not until the intelligence apparatus, the HUMINT apparatus in particular, becomes focused on meso-level mobilizing structures did effective insurgent disruption play out. It is here that a savvy combination of ethnographic and law enforcement intelligence provided the greatest return on investment. In Vietnam, we see that the ethnographic familiarity of indigenous Vietnamese interrogators allowed increased efficacy in extracting information over that of most US interrogators. This is also the case with the Vietnamese PRUs, whose native understanding of local villages allowed the targeting of VCI far more effectively than that of most GVN units. Likewise, the application of law enforcement intelligence methods, as characterized by the VCI targeting dossiers, permitted the collation of disparate streams of HUMINT into a product that allowed for efficient targeting of the VCI. The same can be said of Northern Ireland. It is the application of RUC Special Branch law enforcement intelligence that initially opened the door to the establishment of far reaching informer networks. These in turn, perhaps most famously the Supergrasses, provided complimentary ethnographic intelligence for meso-level PIRA infrastructure targeting. As the policy of Police Primacy emerged, even tactical military intelligence organizations assumed a more law enforcement-like quality in their approach, with great emphasis being placed on covert surveillance for not only targeting, but evidence collection and case building upon arrest. Such methods were instrumental in the ability to turn PIRA and subsequently effect mass convictions in the Supergrass trials; reducing PIRA mobilization and framing efficacy. In both cases, when HUMINT collectors and the “back end” were properly focused and staffed, they were best able to leverage ethnographic and law enforcement intelligence and provide accurate, timely, and relevant information on the insurgency. Conversely, even with the expansive enabling

bureaucracies provided by Phung Hoang and the range of military, law enforcement, and intelligence communities in Great Britain, when the intelligence apparatus was poorly integrated, led, focused, and staffed, the effort was ineffective at best.

In other words, there is a self-reinforcing synergy within the practice of population-centricity in policy and operations (see Figure 10. Process of Population-Centric Self-Reinforcement). Conducting population-centric intelligence as we describe it will focus the counterinsurgent intelligence apparatus on insurgent strategic frames and mobilizing structures. This concerted attack on the insurgent's asserted *raison d'être* and critical personnel will not only have the first order effect of suppressing the insurgent growth, but may also have second and third order effects as well. For instance, intelligence operations, particularly HUMINT, that target the mobilizing structures can create the second order effect of sowing mistrust within the insurgency. This mistrust may then have the third order effect of creating opportunities for the counterinsurgent to recruit further agents as members of the insurgency fear each other more than the state and see their prospects for success within the insurgency diminish. In order to enjoy a successful and durable HUMINT capability, the counterinsurgent must understand and heed the importance of the nature of this self-reinforcement. To be sure, one can stumble upon a successful HUMINT capability through luck, but for this capability to continue successfully and endure as a dependable source of intelligence, and for a policy of population-centricity to persist successfully, a conscious decision must be made to pursue this self-reinforcing process.

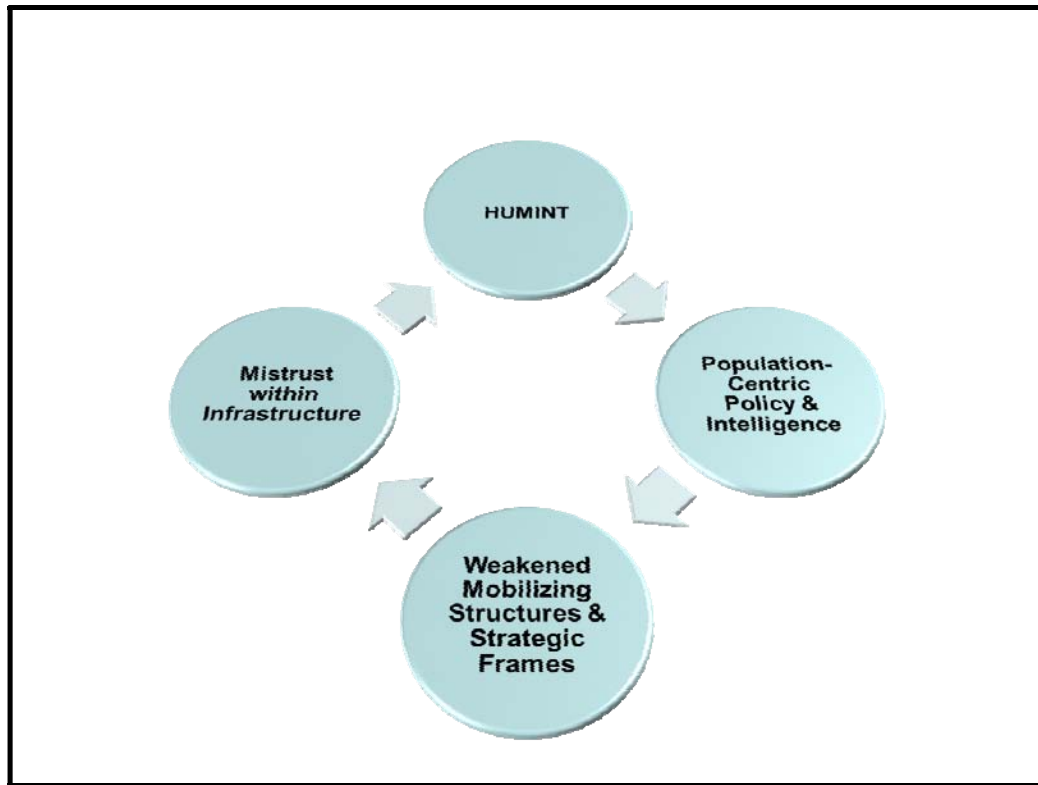


Figure 10. Process of Population-Centric Self-Reinforcement

Factors contributing to the disruption of this self-reinforcing cycle abound. The first, and most obvious, is ambiguity at the highest levels of policy making. When a population-centric approach to intelligence, particularly with regard to HUMINT, is not articulated and institutionalized at this level, it is unlikely that any of the salutary second and third order effects described in our model will occur. Should they, it will be a matter of fortunate happenstance and not as a result of deliberate strategy. That said, disruption of this cycle may occur even when policy makers craft and articulate a population-centric intelligence strategy. The “shoot-to-kill” incidents are untoward examples of how those charged with implementing this strategy may either misunderstand the intent of policy, carry out policy in a manner inconsistent with current needs, though perhaps in keeping with past operational repertoires, or willfully ignore the desires of policy makers. As with the self-reinforcing salutary effects of properly crafting and implementing population-centric intelligence policies, the deleterious effects of implementing poor policy or the mis-implementation of sound policy is self-reinforcing as well.

Let us explore this notion through illustration. A disconcerted effort to create a HUMINT capacity will have little immediate effect on insurgent strategic frames and mobilizing structures. To be fair, it may be the case that some local units will execute policy as expressed or will create their own local HUMINT capacity focused on population-centric intelligence. If so, these areas will be “pockets of excellence” where the insurgency is repressed and cannot operate with effect. That said, without the consistent institutionalization of these operations throughout the conflict environment, the second order effect of spreading mistrust throughout the insurgency will, at best, also be localized and not enjoy the growth necessary for broad insurgent disruption. The insurgency, not faced with a growing problem of infiltration and mistrust within their organization and infrastructure, is afforded the time to develop and exercise counterintelligence measures against those government sources operating within these “pockets of excellence.” Indeed, the task of identifying these sources becomes less opaque by virtue of their isolation. This, in turn, may have the third order effect of diminishing the available pool of potential agents, whose fear of their own organizations may far exceed the promise of benefits resulting from their collusion.

Disruption of this self-reinforcing cycle may occur even when a population-centric intelligence policy is crafted, a supportive HUMINT capacity is built, and policy is implemented as designed. When the imaginations of policy makers and implementers account only for the first order effects of disrupting insurgent strategic frames and mobilizing structures, they are not positioned to exploit the resulting second and third order effects. Successful infiltration breeds insurgent network mistrust and agent recruiting potential. Failure to recognize the latent potential of this implication limits counterinsurgent effectiveness when undermining strategic frames and mobilizing structures. For intelligence, particularly HUMINT, to be incorporated into this self-reinforcing cycle, the counterinsurgent must identify and exploit the consequential effects of successful policy implementation.

Opportunities to reinforce the cycle are plenty as well. One such opportunity, and a lesson to emerge from our case studies, is the need to integrate intelligence organizations themselves. The early phases of each case featured a number of distinct

intelligence organizations each with their own sources of information, analysis, and priorities. As with the operational agencies they supported, intelligence policy was only haphazardly coordinated, if at all, and coordination was often avoided due to institutional rivalries or distrust. Diverse intelligence agencies will have different competencies, often different sources of information, and differing depths of knowledge in specific geographical areas or on different aspects or components of the insurgency. An uncoordinated approach towards gaining information on a given insurgency prohibits a complete picture of the insurgency from developing. Not only does this inhibit effective repression of the insurgency, but it also creates “seams,” or gaps in intelligence coverage the insurgency can exploit. For instance, before the advent of Phung Hoang, intelligence on VCI members was collected by the CIA, police and other territorial forces, and through the Chieu Hoi program. Each source might possess important bits of information on the individual, but not enough by themselves to neutralize that particular VCI. However, with the creation of the PIOCCs and DIOCCs an intelligence “clearing house” was created, capable of pulling in information from all of these sources and allowing the collation of this information into the targeting dossiers. When these organizations were led effectively, this innovation substantially increased the ability to conduct selective and timely repression.

## **2. Inter-functional Intelligence Integration**

Also emerging from the case studies is the significance of intelligence integration within both the policy-making and operational functional apparatus. Without seamless integration, the intelligence apparatus will not satisfactorily divine the information needs of both policy makers and operational decision makers and runs the risk of focusing on issues only tangentially related to the counterinsurgency. Similarly, policy makers and operational decision makers intellectually removed from their intelligence apparatus may ignore analysis evidencing root causes and critical mechanisms of the insurgency, relying instead on their own assumptions, observations, and appraisals in absence of professional analysis. The deliberate application of repression both preemptively and selectively is only possible then in the context of intelligence integration across functional components within the counterinsurgency.

*a. Intelligence – Strategic Policy Integration*

The utility of any intelligence sought and acquired by the counterinsurgent is measured against its relevance to a population-centric strategy enhancing state legitimacy. The intelligence apparatus collecting and processing information that neither informs policy nor satisfies operational requirements focused on the population or insurgent infrastructure is both misguided and wasteful of time and resources. Although intelligence professionals collect and process information in good faith, when channels to policy makers and operational decision makers are ambiguous or static the intelligence cycle is navigated in vain. Though many observers of the counterinsurgent - insurgent struggle note that accurate and timely intelligence is considered the sine qua non for a successful counterinsurgent campaign, no amount or quality of intelligence can hope to compensate for poor strategy. This is true for two reasons. First, strategy is hierarchically nested, and therefore intelligence strategy is necessarily subordinate to and supporting of overarching national or military strategy. In such a context, the primary consumer of intelligence weights the emphasis and prioritization of collection and analysis efforts. Intelligence efforts are focused on that information policy makers deem necessary for the prosecution of operations per their priorities. It is important to note that informed policy is not a prerequisite for the subordination of intelligence and strategic nesting plays out even when policy is misguided and ineffective. Secondly, and closely related, when intelligence strategy is not aligned with the national or military strategic focus, intelligence products may not resonate with policy makers no matter the utility, quality, or relevance of the product provided.

The planning and direction phase of the intelligence cycle is the initial point during which policy makers interact with the intelligence apparatus and arguably carries greater importance than the other phases as it sets the stage for all subsequent stages of the cycle. When we recognize that state policy and strategy shape the policy, strategy, and priority for the intelligence apparatus, we must reconsider the subsequent implications for the effects of intelligence on repression selection. Articulation of strategic policy is the point at which the ability of the state to inform the intelligence cycle becomes relevant to the quality of subsequently available intelligence. That is to

say, policy makers understanding the dynamics of insurgency craft strategies focusing intelligence operations on the population, insurgent infrastructure, and the interrelating elements of Political Opportunity Structures, Mobilizing Structures, and Strategic Frames as offered by social movement theory. Policy makers lacking this understanding frequently craft strategies focusing on the tangible outputs of insurgency, such as attacks and “fielded forces”. To do so results in an intelligence apparatus that is inherently reactive, inefficient, and of questionable relevance in producing an accurate assessment of insurgent and infrastructure strength, scope, and capacity.

The formation and communication of appropriate strategic policy also influences the subsequent ability of the intelligence apparatus to learn dynamically and provide policy makers the intelligence necessary to pursue more selective and preemptive repression. A state suffering a patent misunderstanding of the nature of the insurgency will fail to provide the necessary direction, manpower, and material support that the intelligence apparatus requires to advance its support to policy and operations. In this way state policy bears upon the remainder of the stages of the intelligence cycle. For the intelligence apparatus to effectively and efficiently provide the timely, accurate, and relevant intelligence that policy makers and operational decision makers require, the state must invest adequate resources in appropriate intelligence collection, processing, exploitation, and analysis capacity necessary to cull raw information and generate useable intelligence. Finally, similar attention must be paid to the dissemination processes necessary to allow for timely operational planning. With a proper focus and appropriate resourcing, policy makers shape the intelligence apparatus, allowing it to progress more quickly along its learning curve and consequently expand the repression selection menu to include more selective and preemptive methods.

***b. Intelligence – Operational Integration***

Integration of the intelligence apparatus and policy maker is but one step in creating an effective repression capability. Equally important is the integration of the intelligence apparatus and operational decision makers. The ability to apply selective and preemptive repression is largely contingent on the ability to accurately identify, find, and

neutralize key individuals and processes within the insurgency and its infrastructure. It is not sufficient for the intelligence apparatus to operate passively, providing information such as threat forecasts, order of battle assessments, and political and physical environmental analysis only when prodded by those operational decision makers whom they support. Nor is it sufficient for operational decision makers to haphazardly seek information from the intelligence apparatus. Rather, in addition to the aforementioned analysis, the intelligence apparatus must provide specific targeting analysis to operational decision makers upon which to predicate operations. Operations must be conducted both with the intent to neutralize key members or processes of the insurgency and to generate successive intelligence for future operations. Operationally, this implies that methods of surveillance and capture rather than kill will assume primacy, and that great effort must be applied in securing and exploiting sensitive site and informer intelligence for the planning and prosecution of future targets. Simply put, operational planning and conduct should reflect the need to generate cycles of successive intelligence rather than simply for discreet target engagement.

Where this integration is most important and effective is at the lowest possible levels of the intelligence and operational decision-making processes. As the strength of an insurgency resides locally, in the neighborhoods, towns, and villages within which the infrastructure operates and resides, this is where the insurgent gains familiarity with and control over the population; translating these, by way of meso-level mobilizing structures, into recruits, resources, and their own intelligence. This is also the level at which insurgents effectively leverage what force they do enjoy to isolate and defeat government control mechanisms. In the long war, it is the accumulation of these efforts across disparate locations which results in insurgent success and government collapse. It follows then that, in order to effectively disrupt this process, appropriate intelligence and operational integration must also occur at this level. When the intelligence apparatus successfully operates at the local level, it is able to gain the frequently subtle and nuanced information that comprises ethnographic and law



enforcement intelligence. Without proper integration at this level, operational decision makers cannot hope to enjoy this type of intelligence, which they require to focus their force advantage vis-à-vis the insurgent.

### **3. The Challenge of Conditional Legitimacy**

The “shoot-to-kill” controversy in Northern Ireland reveals what we believe to be an important lesson for the counterinsurgent. It exposes the concept that perceptions of legitimacy in timing and targeting are contextually dependent. The ambushes in question were largely viewed by the greater population, particularly the Catholic population, as extra-judicial killings rather than legitimate military action against known combatants. Repression selectivity in this case became a matter not of whether the target was known PIRA, nor of whether the repression was applied prior to the emergence of PIRA violent activity, but of whether that target was engaged with lethal force prior or consequent to posing an immediate threat to security forces. It was not sufficient that British forces positively identified known PIRA members engaging in activities related to terrorism prior to applying lethal force. Despite the selective nature of *who* was being targeted, this practice was still perceived among the local population as illegitimate seemingly as a result of the limited threat to security forces as a result of this practice. One might argue that legitimacy in this case was a function of whether or not the engagement was considered a “fair fight.”

The lines between target and timing in such a case become blurred, and indeed the two become subordinate to a question of greater legitimacy. The standard by which target selectivity was measured in popular opinion became the PIRA’s active engagement of security forces with lethal force. In those cases where the British triggered an ambush after the PIRA had applied lethal force, the local population, and indeed the PIRA itself, saw the subsequent battle as selective and legitimate and little public outcry resulted –

this was a “fair fight.” Where British forces triggered an ambush prior to PIRA hostilities, the British forces were accused of having engaged in extra-legal killings of potential criminals rather than preemptive engagement of enemy combatants.<sup>271</sup>

The implications of this realization for the counterinsurgent are thorny at best. It underscores the potential that counterinsurgent perceptions of what may constitute selective vs. indiscriminate repression targeting may not coincide with that of the greater population. If this is the case, the resultant disequilibrium between policy and values opens political opportunity for the insurgent and strengthens insurgent strategic frames. Furthermore, popular perceptions will be largely contextual and predicting what these perceptions may be towards the selective vs. indiscriminate nature of a particular repression policy becomes an additional requirement for the intelligence apparatus. The utility of ethnographic intelligence in this regard is clear and the implications of this paradox buttress support for the criticality of this type of intelligence in the counterinsurgent fight. Furthermore, such cases point to an inherent legitimacy offered by police practices within the context of the counterinsurgency. Relative to traditional military methods, practices such as the conduct of arrest rather than lethal ambush may allow the counterinsurgent to avoid some of the pitfalls of variable popular perceptions.

## **B. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MODEL**

The application of our theoretical model to empirical case studies revealed implications for both the prescriptive and descriptive utility of the model.

### **1. Repression Type and Timing**

Recalling our typology of repression timing and target, we posit that relatively few states enjoy sufficient population-centric intelligence capacity to repress both preemptively and selectively (Type 1). As well, we propose that similarly few states suffer from such a paucity of population-centric intelligence that they are forced to

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<sup>271</sup> Ironically, this perception seems irreconcilable with PIRA strategic frames claiming legal combatant status for ASU members vs. their categorization as criminals or terrorists. PIRA legal combatant status would carry with it legitimacy for the British practice of ambush following positive identification, whereas the standard by which legitimacy came to be measured is more in keeping with law enforcement practices and rules governing the use of force.

repress both indiscriminately and reactively (Type 4). This being the case, we argue that most states have a choice of applying repression either preemptively and indiscriminately (Type 3) or reactively and selectively (Type 2). While our case sample size herein is necessarily limited, based on the empirical evidence we have explored we tentatively propose that the most lucrative repression strategy available to the bulk of states is the adoption of Type 2 repression policy focusing on methods of population-centric intelligence collection, particularly that of the law enforcement variety. This is not only advantageous to those states faced with the choice between Types 2 & 3 repression, but as well for those states seeking more efficacy than that offered by Type 4 repression. Due to the shared reactive nature of both Types 2 & 4 repression, it might be possible to enjoy Type 2 repression simply as a matter of policy choice with regard to repression targeting and emphasis on law enforcement intelligence and operations. Both of these policy choices are significantly supported by the implementation of a strategic policy of police primacy.

Two considerations lead us to this conclusion. First, focusing the intelligence apparatus on law enforcement intelligence and tailoring the state's operational capacity for reactive and selective repression is considerably less difficult, expensive, and time consuming than revamping the intelligence apparatus for an ethnographic intelligence focus and pursuing a preemptive operational capability. Indeed where a nascent insurgent movement has already emerged, states must necessarily pursue a reactive repression policy while developing ethnographic intelligence capacity. Though opening insurgent political opportunity by way of being reactive, the selectivity of Type 2 repression dampens insurgent infrastructure growth by limiting opportunities to provoke the uncommitted bulk of the population and thereby undermining insurgent mobilizing structures and strategic frames. We believe that in most cases the benefits of the latter will outweigh the costs of the former. Second, as a law enforcement focused intelligence apparatus is more simple to generate and integrate with the operational capacity of the state (indeed, in most cases it already exists and just needs to be prioritized), the attendant learning curve is steeper and the counterinsurgent will produce actionable intelligence at a more accelerated rate than by pursuing a policy prioritizing ethnographic intelligence.

This is not to say that law enforcement intelligence and operations should be pursued to the exclusion of ethnographic intelligence and the preemptive political actions it supports, rather these tracks should be pursued in parallel, but with an initial priority to security and selective operations.

## **2. Limitations of the Model**

The Cycles of Contentious Politics model as we have developed and applied it to the cases implicitly has as its foundation an approach for state policy decisions predicated on the assumption that the state is a unitary actor behaving rationally. The implication of this assumption is the state, as a unified decision maker, surveys the situation with which it is faced, develops objectives and those options available to meet these objectives, weighs the consequences of each option, and bases policy decisions in favor of the most value-maximizing option.<sup>272</sup> As we describe, the Cycles of Contentious Politics model, repression selection is a function of policy makers understanding the nature of the threat, crafting a population-centric strategy to meet that threat, and posturing their intelligence and operational apparatuses to execute the chosen course of action. While this is a valid approach for students of counterinsurgency studying policy decisions, as well as for policy makers crafting strategy, this approach is not satisfactory for examining the execution of these policies in the field. As both cases reveal, even after national-level policy makers decided to pursue population-centric strategies featuring selective repression against the insurgent infrastructure, the implementation of this policy was far from uniform at the lowest levels of operational execution. Instead, such policies worked well in those areas where they were prioritized by the local intelligence apparatus and operational decision makers. Likewise, population-centric strategy was pursued half-heartedly, or not at all, in those areas where the local intelligence apparatus and operational decision makers were not nested with the population-centric objectives of strategic policy makers. Future development and application of the Cycles of Contentious Politics model must be more sophisticated in addressing the relationship between policy making and policy execution.

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<sup>272</sup> Graham Allison and Phillip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, (New York, NY: Longman, 1999), 24.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Future Counterinsurgency Operations**

#### ***a. Police Primacy***

In both cases, counterinsurgent success did not begin in earnest until a policy of police primacy was acknowledged and adopted by the counterinsurgent, either explicitly or implicitly. While, with only two cases, we cannot make a case for causality, in our cases there appears to have been a positive correlation between the acceptance of police primacy and successful intra- and inter-functional intelligence integration. Given our assertions regarding the implications of law enforcement and ethnographic intelligence on the available menu of repression selection, as well as the subsequent implications of repression policy choices on movement intensity and durability, this apparent correlation should appear at least reasonably intuitive. As our case studies demonstrate, population-centric intelligence is a hallmark of effective law enforcement work. As a result, expertise and capacity in these types of intelligence frequently reside in a state's law enforcement intelligence apparatus to a greater degree than is the case in traditional military intelligence apparatus.

We ascribe this to the distinct cultural norms between police and military organizations and practices. Militaries, as a rule, exist to fight and win a nation's wars, a largely externally focused role. Conversely, the role of police is generally aligned with the enforcement and maintenance of law and order internal to the state. While both security-focused, the skills and norms associated with organizations and operations within each are necessarily aligned with their design and purpose. Furthermore, our case studies demonstrate that the climate of a given counterinsurgent campaign is substantively influenced by the organizational culture and norms of that organization leading the fight. This is not a revolutionary notion by any means, indeed in military parlance this is known as a command climate. Nevertheless, acknowledgement that such a climate exists across disparate organizations involved in a common campaign must precede and inform any deliberate decision regarding the appropriate roles and respective levels of influence and authority of these organizations in the counterinsurgency.

In light of the importance of target selectivity in undermining those mobilizing structures and strategic frames propping up insurgent success, as well as allowing for a policy of either Type 1 or 2 repression, a law enforcement-minded climate seems a necessary condition for counterinsurgent success. Should our observed correlation hold true, this implies that the ultimate goal of any counterinsurgency campaign strategy should be the eventual adoption of police primacy of mission. We do not propose that this will always be the case. Indeed, the appropriate primacy of mission is largely contextual. Police primacy in a non-permissive environment is potentially catastrophic, as is evidenced by the experiences of the RUC in Northern Ireland immediately preceding British Army intervention. However, we do propose that successful population-centric policy is ultimately unlikely within a climate of military primacy. The crux of the problem then becomes a matter of properly determining when a given context will support police primacy. Our recommendation is that police primacy should in fact be the default policy, deviation from which should be a matter of exception rather than rule and should occur only when sufficient cause can be established.

***b. Interagency Coordination***

Perhaps the most tired cliché of our recent experiences is the importance of interagency coordination. While we do not wish to beat this already dead horse, we would be remiss were we to discard this recommendation in its entirety. Our cases bear out this lesson time and again. We have identified and fleshed out what we believe are the specific lessons relevant to interagency coordination in our sections on intra- and inter-functional intelligence integration above. These, we feel, are of particular criticality in the counterinsurgent fight. Nevertheless, the lessons can be expanded to include integration across all functional agencies, not merely with regard to the intelligence apparatus. Indeed, though not addressed above, the integration between operational decision makers at the lowest levels and strategic policy is just as critical for successful implementation of stated policy and is a matter we will address shortly. Ultimately, we parrot the recommendations of so many of our contemporaries when we recommend the inextinguishable value of interagency coordination in the counterinsurgent fight.

## 2. Future Research

### a. *Consideration of Other Approaches*

As a matter of simplicity, it is useful to assume unified, rational decision making at the strategic level of analysis in prescribing the policy making process. This assumption, however, may be increasingly less useful when descriptively analyzing the practice of these policy choices as our focus moves further from the policy maker and closer to the ground executive authority. Future research into the relationship between intelligence, repression policy, and movement intensity and durability should account for this disparity. We propose the inclusion and consideration of such models of decision making as the Organizational Behavior and Governmental Politics Models a la Allison and Zelikow.

Per the Organizational Behavior Model, the output of the government decision making process is not simply the execution of policy as prescribed by policy makers, but is rather a function of the organizational behavior of those organizations tasked with implementing policy.<sup>273</sup> Additionally, the physical capacity of any organization tasked to implement policy constrains the options available to policy makers.<sup>274</sup> There are several characteristics of organizational behavior that are particularly germane to understanding why organizations may not simply execute policy as prescribed. Existing organizations forced to perform tasks outside of their normal task repertoire, and thus requiring coordination with other organizations, will rarely execute policy as originally intended due to entrenched operational procedures and procedural friction encountered in coordination between disparate organizations.<sup>275</sup> Future research would do well to further a better understanding of and accounting for these dynamics to improve the utility of this model.

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<sup>273</sup> Graham Allison and Phillip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, (New York, NY: Longman, 1999), 164.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 179.

Considering the implications of organizational behavior on the formulation and execution of repression policy, we see a number of examples where our more simplistic approach may be supplemented. As an example, Andrew Krepinevich, in his book, *The Army in Vietnam*, provides a convincing case that the entire US military, and by extension the ARVN, was conditioned to view the fight in Vietnam in conventional military terms. This conditioning resulted in repression policy which focused on the conventional engagement of VC field forces, eschewing efforts to identify and disrupt the insurgent infrastructure. As well, examples abound of inconsistent implementation of otherwise sound policy. GVN policy makers pursued a policy of counter-VCI efforts under police, rather than military control - making the National Police the executive agent of Phung Hoang. GVN officials, however, failed to recognize that while the National Police were designed for and performed well at simple tasks such as arresting thieves and draft dodgers, they were not initially organized, trained, manned, or equipped to effectively target and neutralize the VCI. As a result of policy incongruity with organizational procedural norms and procedural friction with the PRUs and RF/PFs in the field, they became overshadowed by these other organizations. Had they accounted for this incongruity, the GVN might have delayed the decision to place the NP at the head of Phung Hoang until they were more capable. The GVN also encountered organizational behavior obstacles to Phung Hoang implementation at the provincial level. Here, provincial chiefs in charge of policy implementation based decisions on their understanding of the conflict as influenced by their previous experiences as well as their understanding of the role of provincial executive officers. Some with military backgrounds continued to pursue a tactical military approach as was policy before the advent of Phung Hoang. Others merely paid lip service to Saigon, but continued to avoid contact with the VC and VCI as was their existing procedure.

Evidence of similar organizational behavior can be seen in the British Army's engagement of PIRA in Northern Ireland. The "shoot-to-kill" incidents, and indeed the predisposition of the SAS towards the lethal ambush, typifies an organization operating along entrenched procedural lines and failing to implement policy as directed in light of policy incongruity with procedural norms and procedural friction with disparate



organizations, in this case the RUC. As well, the difficulty and delay in integrating disparate intelligence apparatus reflects the friction encountered when attempting to coordinate procedural norms across organizations, particularly organizations competing for primacy of mission. Indeed, the fight for primacy itself is a manifestation of the dynamics of organizational behavior. Even after a policy of police primacy was decided upon, British Army decision makers continued to maneuver for influence and traditional and conventional military methods of prosecuting PIRA targets.

While the Organizational Behavior Model is informative on the question of policy implementation, the Governmental Politics Model is useful for examining the nuances of policy formulation. This approach describes how policy decisions result not from a unitary, rational decision maker, but rather as a product of negotiation between powerful political actors.<sup>276</sup> Governments are considered as an assembly of various actors, each possessing of political power and their own understanding of the goals, objectives, and the choices available in a given decision making situation.<sup>277</sup> These political actors are typically leaders of significant bureaucracies. These organizations serve as the leader's power base and provide them the information and influence necessary to secure, grow, and leverage their political power. Policy decisions then are a function of compromises between competing political actors rather than the value-maximizing behavior of a unitary and rational decision maker.<sup>278</sup>

Considered through the lens of governmental politics, the case of Vietnam reveals some of the factors hindering the formation of population-centric strategy in the early phase of the counterinsurgency, as well as some of the inefficiencies of Phung Hoang. Early in the conflict, the militaries of both the GVN and U.S. were the most powerful and influential political actors in policy-making circles. Leaders of these organizations could successfully resist efforts to divest power in "civilian" agencies with competing positions on the conduct of the war; organizations such as the GVN police,

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<sup>276</sup> Graham Allison and Phillip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, (New York, NY: Longman, 1999), 255.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 294-295.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

U.S. State Department, or the CIA. Policy decisions and implementation reflected the positions of those with the most bureaucratic power, and thus, as a result of the imbalance, were dominated by traditional military thought. When the decision to implement Phung Hoang was made, police elements assigned to support it were routinely hobbled by manpower deficiencies as the best and brightest GVN officers were channeled to the ARVN.

Likewise, the process by which both the policy of police primacy and the integration of intelligence apparatus were arrived at in Northern Ireland is a classic study in the process of governmental politics. Both came to fruition largely as a result of the fortunate confluence of several like-minded policy makers in the RUC, British Army, intelligence, and Stormont bureaucracies during the mid-1970s. These power brokers were able, by way of influence, negotiation, and cooperation, to settle the matter of official stated policy governing mission primacy in Northern Ireland, as well as make substantive progress towards integrating disparate intelligence apparatus. Despite their great success in beginning the shift of organizational attitudes, convincing implementation of police primacy lagged policy by some years. Nevertheless, the process of intelligence apparatus integration, begun some years earlier by their predecessors, achieved impressive levels of success during the tenure of these leaders as a result of the dynamics of governmental politics.

The Cycles of Contentious Politics model remains a useful tool for students who choose to investigate and describe the interaction between intelligence, repression policy, and movement intensity and durability. The model is also useful as a guide for policy makers in crafting effective counterinsurgent strategy. That said, further research is warranted, and students of repression policy decisions should continue this research with an attempt to gain a more nuanced understanding of intelligence and repression policy development and implementation in the counterinsurgency. More nuanced models, those that consider the complexities of organizational behavior and governmental politics, are needed in our efforts to help policy and decision makers prepare for the bureaucratic and operational difficulties they invariably face in their efforts to defeat insurgent threats to society.

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